ENCHANTED RECEPTION

*Religion and the supernatural
in medieval Troy narratives*

edited by

TINE SCHEIJNEN &
ELLEN SÖDERBLOM SAARELA

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UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

For Zephyr, Irma, and Edit, who have enchanted our lives

Acknowledgments

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Facing the Other

Medieval Challenges in Retelling the Trojan Tale

Tine Scheijnen

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NE OF THE hidden pearls of Middle English literature is the *Seege or Batayle of Troye*, dated to the fourteenth century. Originally a (songbook?) romance, it was later copied as the introduction to a historiographical treatise and, elsewhere, into a broader collection of folktales. It is now extant in a total of four manuscripts.[1] Three versions of that poem[2] depict Achilles as a black warrior strongly associated with 'Otherly' creatures, including a witch mother, and who swears by "Mahoun" (Mohammed):[3]

> Achilles answered the king: "All that I can, I will do. I swear, Sire, by god Mohammed [...]." Achilles' mother was a witch. She taught her son a fair trick: how he should keep himself whole and sound and come back from battle

[1] For a complete edition of all manuscripts, with extensive introduction, see Barnicle 1927. Selected studies on literary context, sources and narrative structure are provided by Hofstrand 1936, Atwood & Whitaker 1944 and McDonald 2000. On Achilles in the *Seege*, see also Atwood 1942.

[2] Besides L, also the E and A manuscripts. Scholars generally assume the L redaction to be the closest representative of the original. This still bears the characteristics of a composition for an oral context: Barnicle 1927, xxxiii– lvi. On interventions regarding Achilles, see also Scheijnen 2023.

[3] The text passage is discussed at more length in chapter 1.2. It also quoted and discussed by Schoess in this volume (chapter 2.4).

without a wound. Achilles secretly did then as his mother had taught him. With witchcraft and necromancy, his mother bathed him in the water of hell. Suspended by the feet, she thrice dipped him down, body and blood, head and crown. But the soles of his feet were where his mother held her hands. And his head was black as Mohammed, from feet to crown, and his entire body was as hard as flint.[4]

In more than one sense, this peculiar characterisation draws the reader's attention – especially given that, as a Greek warrior, Achilles is an enemy of the Trojans with which English medieval readership would have associated itself. Why is Achilles so clearly Othered? Does this imply a tone of intended racism – and can we use such a modern concept at all in the analysis of medieval texts? What does this case tell us about the religious ideologies at play, both in the originally 'pagan' storyworld and in the cultural-historical context in which this poem was composed, copied and received? And does such rewriting occur more widely in medieval Troy narratives? Are there differences across genres, language traditions or, more broadly, between the (Latin-oriented) vernacular west and the Byzantine east? Such questions lie at the core of this Enchanted Reception volume.

1.1 "MEDIEVAL TROY IS NOT A CLASSICAL CITY"[5]

Tales of Troy form a major narrative cluster in world literature. Since Homer (eighth century BCE), the story has survived thanks to its adaptability to new socio-cultural contexts.[6] Its rich and multiform path through hexameter poetry, tragedy, imperial prose and so many other genres across both

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[4] *Seege* 1332–1352: "Achilles onswerde þe king þer-to, / 'Al þat y may, y wol do. / Y swere, sire, by god Mahoun, / [...]' / Achilles modir was a wiche, y-wis; / Heo tauȝte hire sone a fair coyntise / How he scholde him kepe hol and sounde / And come fro bataile wiþ-oute wounde. / Achilles dude þo pryvely / As his modir him tauȝte witerly. / Wiþ wiche-craft and nygremancy þer-til / His modir him baþede in þe water of helle, / And was honged by þe feet / & þries deopped adoun / Body and blod, hed and croun, / Bote þeo soles of his feet / þer his modir hondes seet. / And his hed was blak as Mahoun / ffro þeo feet to þe croun / And al his body was hard as flynt". I quote from the L manuscript as edited by Barnicle 1927. The translation is my own.

[5] Benson 1980, 3.

[6] Goldwyn 2015; Sweeney 2018.

the Greek and Latin literary histories hardly needs to be pointed out here; neither does the richness of visual artistry that accompanied it. This volume is concerned with the particular changes that this colourful tradition underwent when entering the high Middle Ages between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. In both the more Latin-inspired west and the Byzantine Greek east,[7] this was a period of renewed literary interest and creativity during which Troy received important attention. Without over-generalizing, it is safe to say that this happened in a decisively new and different socio-cultural world than that in which classical and late antique Troy literature had developed.

Of particular interest are considerable changes to the story, inspired by its renewed and increased political importance for the historical 'transmission of power' or *translatio imperii*:[8] a notion that had gradually developed since the earlier Middle Ages. Virgil had already established Aeneas and the legendary Trojans as the historical ancestors of the Romans. Medieval powers (including the Byzantines, who considered themselves *Romanoi*),[9] sought political legitimation by further exploiting this concept and developed elaborate Trojan genealogies (e.g. Brutus was invented as the forefather of the British).[10] Troy became the first chapter of history. This notion changed the medieval understanding of historiography[11] and was crystalised in the influential work of writers such as Geoffrey of Monmouth (*De gestis Britonum*: "On the deeds of the Britons", twelfth century)[12] and Wace (*Roman de Brut*,

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[7] Clear distinctions between 'east' and 'west' (or 'Europe') are in themselves ideologically charged and are refuted by, for example, recent global approaches to the Middle Ages (Heng 2018, 5; Heng 2013). Meanwhile, the mutual interactions and potential influence between both 'traditions' (as they have traditionally been perceived) have firmly been established and offer potential for further investigation (see below). As Nilsson points out, however, the scholarly traditions pertaining to these respective literary systems have developed in different directions and at different paces (2004, 10).

[8] Witalisz 2011, 28, 41.

[9] Jeffreys 1980, 470–472; Nilsson 2004, 14.

[10] Witalisz 2011, 28, 41; Sweeney 2018, 114–116.

[11] "While [his predecessors] chose to start from the creation of the world, Geoffrey's work opens with the pagan heroes of Troy" (Lewis 2020, 398). See also Ingledew 1994; Simpson 1998; Keller 2008; Goldwyn 2018.

[12] Smith 2020.

twelfth century)[13], as well as in a Byzantine chronicle tradition that had bloomed starting with Malalas in the sixth century; this latter also formed the basis for the Slavonic Troy tradition.[14] All of these developments incited renewed interest in the Troy story and led to a rich output of literature commissioned by royal courts.[15]

Indeed, political appropriation increased the need to customise the ancient mythological story to medieval standards. This literary challenge lent itself particularly well to the romance genre, resulting in several influential Troy reworkings. In the medieval Greek as in the (mostly) vernacular western tradition, the story of Troy was transformed into a romance. For the medieval Greek tradition, Manasses' chronicle treatment of the Trojan war (twelfth century) already interacted in important ways with the contemporary novelistic tradition.[16] Later centuries yielded several full-blown Greek Troy romances, including the *Byzantine Achilleid* or *Tale of Achilles* (fourteenth century), and the *Byzantine Iliad* or *Tale of Troy* (fourteenth to fifteenth century). These texts, too, developed under the direct influence of (or in interaction with) local non-Troy romances;[17] some even open a dialogue with specific literary works such as *Digenis Akritas* and the Palaiologan romances.[18]

These medieval Greek Troy romances display dynamics of reworking similar to those that can be identified in the vernacular west: the stories were Christianised (e.g. Paris is hosted by monks in *Tale of Troy*) and romanticised (e.g. Achilles takes part in tournaments, dressed as a Byzantine nobleman and very much in love in *Tale of Achilles*). These developments seem "highly influenced by a western kind of romance tradition".[19]

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[13] Le Saux 2020.

[14] Nilsson 2004, 13–18. On Malalas, see also chapter 6.1 (Goldwyn) in this volume.

[15] The court of Eleonor of Aquitaine took a central position in this (Jeffreys 1980; see also chapter 3 of this volume: Hölzlhammer). More generally, also Ingledew 1994, 695–696; Sweeney 2018, 116–120.

[16] Nilsson 2004, 18–22.

[17] Nilsson 2004, 26–28; Constantinou 2019. Nilsson points out that the transmission network of the *Byzantine Iliad* is also much richer than this (2004, 31–33).

[18] Lavagnini 2016; Goldwyn & Nilsson 2019.

[19] Goldwyn & Nilsson 2019, 199.

A pioneer in this western tradition was Benoît de Sainte-Maure (twelfth century), who medievalised the story in vernacular French.[20] He presented his *Roman de Troie* as "true",[21] explicitly abandoning Homer in favour of the chronicle-like accounts allegedly authored by the alleged eye-witnesses Dictys and Dares, much as Malalas had done in the sixth century.[22] Dictys and Dares' alternative prose accounts of the Trojan War (probably dated to the first centuries CE) had created fertile ground for such a new romance approach. Besides their increased attention to the political and chronological developments of the war, the Olympian gods in their versions no longer took active roles in the narrative. Thus, they already tackled what would become an important point of criticism against Homer's more mythological approach. In their footsteps, Benoît further shaped his own poem according to the standards of medieval popular romance: he zoomed in on important love plots, generally updated armour and war techniques and integrated Christian chivalric values into the behaviour of the heroes, who became 'knights':[23]

> [Benoît] set the tone for the next three centuries, transforming the epic heroes into knights of Christendom and presenting the defeated Trojans rather than the victorious Greeks as heroes of war.[24]

In the thirteenth century, Guido delle Colonne translated Benoît into Latin using a more historiographical and ideologically charged tone;[25] this endeavour was so successful that it overshadowed Benoît's work in certain

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[20] Witalisz 2011; Green 2002. Jeffreys (1980, 275, 278, 281–82) wonders if Eleonor of Aquitaine's commission of the *Roman de Troie* may have been inspired by (among other elements) her witnessing of this renewed popularity of the (Comnenian) novel in the east.

[21] Burgess & Kelly 2017, 6–7.

[22] Griffin 1908; Levenson 1979. For the Byzantine reception of Dictys and Dares, see also chapter 6.1 (Goldwyn) in this volume.

[23] Yiavis 2016.

[24] Wilflingseder 2007, 1 (referring to Scherer 1963, xiii).

[25] This change in tone is addressed in chapters 2.3 (Schoess), 6.3 (Goldwyn) and 7 (Hoogenboom) of this volume.

contexts.[26] Together, these two authors formed the start of a rich transnational romance reception of Troy. It came to include countless versions in other western vernacular languages (e.g. German,[27] English,[28] Dutch, Russian, Spanish). In medieval Greek, the Franco-Greek society and crusader community of Morea produced a Byzantine translation of Benoît (*War of Troy*, thirteenth century),[29] which bridges the Byzantine and western Troy literary traditions.[30]

All of the developments described above fall under the umbrella of 'the Matter of Troy', defined by Ingela Nilsson as "the legendary subject matter and not the textual-literary references (…) to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*". Essentially, then, these Troy romances are based on "non-Homeric" story material, often explicitly drawn from Dictys and Dares.[31] Homer remained an influential name in medieval literature ranging across both the geographical east and to the west, though his legacy was frequently problematised: vernacular romances tend to mention Homer's name as a source *not* to be trusted.[32] Alleged eye-witnesses such as Dictys and Dares are explicitly favoured in his stead, as early as in Benoît's prologue to *Roman de Troie*. This becomes a popular trend in romance literature.[33] The Byzantine relationship with Homer can, in certain instances, be deemed similarly problematic.[34] However, his importance in this latter tradition remained more complex, as Homer maintained a significant role in the educational system.[35] As Adam Goldwyn points out in this volume:

[26] Griffin 1908 ; Benson 1980, 9–31; Keller 2008, 133–136.

[27] Also chapter 3.4 (Hölzlhammer) of this volume.

[28] Also chapter 2 (Schoess) of this volume.

[29] Nilsson 2004, 29; Jeffreys 2019. Also chapter 3.3 (Hölzlhammer) of this volume.

[30] Papathomopoulos & Jeffreys 1996, li.

[31] Nilsson 2004, 11, 16–17.

[32] See Griffin (1908, 40–41), whose goal it is to trace "Un-Homeric elements in the Story of Troy". Medieval Homer reception is also discussed by e.g. Wells 1916, 106; Simpson 1998, 411; Witalisz 2011, 68–70. For Homer's Latin reception in the Middle Ages, see Ferrari 2021, 329.

[33] E.g. Benson 1980, 15–19; Burgess & Kelly 2017, 6–7.

[34] Nilsson 2004, 12.

[35] Demoen & Verhelst 2019, 177.

Homer was at once among the central texts of the Byzantine education system and of Byzantine identity, yet was also culturally distant in ways that made it difficult for Byzantines to understand both linguistically and ideologically.[36]

Besides chronicles and romances, Nilsson therefore defines a third type of medieval Troy literature, that of the commentaries and paraphrases: textually oriented genres that build upon the Homeric epics in order to explain and contextualise them for the new medieval socio-literary era.[37] Allegorical interpretations of the ancient epics offered one avenue into this, as discussed by Baukje van den Berg in this volume.[38] By means of their critical yet exegetical approach, Eustathios and Tzetzes importantly injected Homer with new philosophical and pedagogical meaning in the Greek Middle Ages.[39]

Their literary production may start from a different background than the 'matter of Troy' literature, but it was not isolated from it. What binds the reworkings in all of these genres and transnational traditions together is a strong need to integrate the Troy story from the original, mythological sources into a new socio-cultural system with a new set of ideological values. Given the renewed historical-political importance of Troy in that context, this reintegration is both a necessary and a particularly challenging and delicate endeavour that requires significant literary creativity and, in some instances, substantial rewriting.

1.2 BETWEEN SELF AND OTHER

When reading through the rest of the *Seege* text mentioned in the first paragraph of this chapter, it becomes clear that the black Achilles certainly is one of the most prominent instances of cultural rewriting in this brief poem. This recasting of Achilles entails a few adaptations of the original mythological character that were likely inspired by more familiar elements from medieval folktale and religion (e.g. his mother as a witch instead of a pagan

[36] Chapter 6, page 140.
[37] Nilsson 2004, 12.
[38] Chapter 5.
[39] Cardin 2018. On Eustathios, see chapter 5 (Van den Berg) of this volume; on Tzetzes: chapter 6 (Goldwyn).

goddess, hell instead of Styx as a source of supernatural power).[40] Although clearly controversial even within the medieval reception of the *Seege*,[41] these interventions may have helped the medieval audience to understand and immerse themselves in the text.

Of particular interest is this text's tendency to 'Other' the enemy. This is a widespread practice within the romance tradition, and examples abound within the Middle English literary tradition from which the *Seege* text stems. Guy of Warwick slays eastern giants to protect his native land and Christian religion.[42] In *King of Tars*, a child is born a formless lump and can only change to have human features after his Muslim father converts to Christianity, which causes his skin (literally!) to turn from black to white.[43] Richard *Cœur de Lion* consumes Turkish flesh as an ideological statement during his military campaign in the east ('crusader cannibalism').[44] In all of these cases, an underlying plot of rivalry between the western and undeniably Christian 'Self' and the eastern, or Muslim, 'Other' inspires characterisation elements or plot events that seem aimed at consolidating an ideological, geographical and cultural identity at the expense of groups who do not fit into that image. Today, we would not hesitate to call such mechanisms racism. Indeed, several recent studies have argued for the usefulness of that concept in the literary interpretation of pre-modern texts, despite the risks of anachronism. In 2015, Cord Whitaker concluded that:

> The question of race's relevance is solved: yes, the Middle Ages have been thoroughly raced. The question at hand is, exactly how are they raced? Not whether, but how is medieval race-thinking different from modern racism?[45]

In several pioneering studies, Geraldine Heng has gone on to answer that latter question. The mechanism of denigrating Others with the result of estab-

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[40] Scheijnen 2023.

[41] See Barnicle (1927, xxxvii–lvi) for a detailed comparative analysis of the existing manuscripts.

[42] Wilcox 2004, 232; Lumbley 2020, 391.

[43] Gilbert 2004; Miyashiro 2019, 3.

[44] McDonald 2004b; Heng 2018, 120.

[45] Whitaker 2015, 7.

lishing a hierarchy between identities is clearly present in medieval writing. However, where the term 'racism' can help modern readers to grasp some of the unease possibly evoked by such practices, it is crucial to map out and understand precisely *which* ideological parameters define these medieval 'Self' vs. 'Others'.[46] For example, we might investigate which specific connotations Achilles' black skin evoked in medieval times, as compared (and opposed) to today. For although vehicles and effects of discrimination can be similar, each era and cultural system has its own underlying mechanisms and motivators for Othering practices. For the Middle Ages, Heng points out that *religion* was a crucial driving force underlying racism. She underlines the Church's "Universalist ambitions (…) to become a 'State without Borders'".[47] The establishment of Christianity as the one and true religion resulted in a discourse against several different religious groups, such as Jews (within the European west) and Muslims (presented as an antagonistic force situated in the east). The above-mentioned Middle English romances, as part of the contemporary cultural system, were influenced by such surrounding socio-political ideologies. They contribute to this discourse by, for example, reshaping certain characters as Others. They may emphasize alien features (e.g. underlining specific traits of Jewish physiognomy or associating certain religions or geographical locations with monstrous appearances or practices) or argue their enmity towards the dominant ideological system: "For medieval English writers, an imaginary enemy who was 'wholly Other (dark skin, incomprehensible language, pagan culture)' was necessary as an 'unproblematic body to define oneself against'".[48] Skin colour, in this context, was not so much an indicator of ethnicity (as it is today) as it was of (im)pure religion: blackness stood for sin.[49] This helps us to understand the associations that the peculiar characterisation of a black Achilles may have evoked for its audience.

The case of the *Seege* is only one small example of the complex and multiform reworkings of the matter of Troy in the Middle Ages. It helps to illustrate the many ways in which Troy's new socio-cultural role influenced the

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[46] Heng 2018, 3, 27. See also Heng 2003.

[47] Heng 2018, 3.

[48] Salih (2019, 15) refers to Cohen (1999, 84).

[49] Whitaker 2015; Heng 2018, 181–91; Lumbley 2020, 372.

understanding of Other and Self, and by extension of ideological value and identity itself, in the storylines that were transmitted from antiquity.

In the case of Troy literature, moreover, the challenge was particularly complex. The ancient Trojans are in fact *distant* from the medieval setting in ideological mind-set and time (and, particularly for the west, also in space), but their new function as ancestors also requires them to be somehow 'familiar'.[50] In this light, a story set in the pagan east of the Trojan shores finds itself "dangerously close to the Other",[51] located on a "disjunction of the pagan heroic past into a Christian chivalric present".[52] The story needs to be conceptually transformed politically, from the Trojan 'abroad' to the European 'home', and religiously, from the pagan past to the Christian present.[53]

As the *Seege* case has illustrated, medieval Troy romances attempt to domesticate the characters and their political and cultural environment by concrete literary interventions in the texts, in order to underline the 'sameness' of the Trojans to the contemporary context: enemies are characterised in discriminating ways,[54] the ancient gods are called 'false', heroes operating or living in or around Troy are dressed and behave as medieval knights,[55] the Trojan Hector becomes the mirror of an ideal contemporary prince.[56] Important 'updates' are also carried out with regard to gender, so multiple strong, independent or powerful female mythological characters are rewritten to fit the current medieval *mores*.

Just like non-Troy romances, then, and perhaps in a way more ideologically charged, Troy romances reflect on medieval political and religious identity. Also the other contributions in this volume offer ample illustra-

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[50] Harper 2010, 154.

[51] Salih 2019, 5, 34–35. See also Federico 2003, 2.

[52] Witalisz 2011, 72.

[53] This contemporary religious antagonism is also tackled at length in chapter 2 of this volume, where Schoess argues that the representation of idolatry in Troy literature can be interpreted as a vehicle to criticise other contemporary religions, including Islam. Schoess proposes to also read the *Seege* fragment quoted above in this light (chapter 2.4).

[54] "Trojans found and represent order and hierarchy: noble male warriors overthrow monsters" (Salih 2019, 33).

[55] McDonald 2004a; Harper 2010.

[56] Witalisz 2011.

tions of such practices, in which ancient characters receive new meaning to underline contemporary values, for example regarding good male or female behaviour (Van den Berg and Goldwyn),[57] love (Hölzlhammer and Söderblom Saarela),[58] chivalry (Hoogenboom),[59] and appropriate religious practice (Schoess and Wright).[60] It is this volume's aim to scrutinise the ideological implications underlying such reception and rewritings more broadly.

1.3 ENCHANTED TROY RECEPTION: GOALS AND SCOPE OF THIS VOLUME

This volume offers a series of cross-cultural, in-depth studies of twelfth- to fifteenth-century medieval Troy narratives, mainly romances, that are situated across a wide range of language traditions. The main goal is to highlight how the classical reception of religious and supernatural elements, events and characters took form in the Middle Ages and how such developments were embedded in the contemporary socio-cultural (and notably Christian-political) ideological context. While many commendable studies in the blooming field of post-classical Troy reception take a broadly diachronical approach,[61] our **synchronical focus** allows us to dig deep into medieval socio-cultural specificities *and* the local differences among contexts. Besides the famous literary highlights of the period (e.g. Benoît, Guido, Tzetzes and Eustathios), lesser-known texts and authors are included (e.g. the Irish tradition),[62] as well as comparative analyses of texts within the same language tradition (e.g. Middle English[63] and German[64]). The volume subscribes to the **transnational perspective** that has long since proven its relevance for medi-

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[57] Chapters 5 and 6.

[58] Chapters 3 and 8

[59] Chapter 7.

[60] Chapters 2 and 4.

[61] E.g. Thompson 2004; Ford 2007 (on the reception of Homer during the Renaissance). See also collections of studies on Homeric pre- and sequels by Simms 2018 (including studies on Tzetzes, Henryson and medieval genealogies) and by Goldwyn (ed.) 2015 (discussing a.o. Chaucer). Sweeney (2018) discusses the origins of the Troy story, its reception across the ancient world and how it became an icon afterwards.

[62] Chapter 4 (Wright).

[63] Chapter 2 (Schoess).

[64] Chapter 3 (Hölzlhammer).

eval studies.[65] By offering chapters on 'western' (Scheijnen, Schoess, Wright and Hoogenboom)[66] as well as on 'eastern' (Van den Berg)[67] text material, and by including three contributions that discuss both together (Hölzlhammer, Goldwyn and Söderblom Saarela),[68] we also contribute to the endeavour of building bridges between the 'eastern' Byzantine and 'western' vernacular traditions, which on a scholarly level are often still segregated. The focus on **specifically Troy literature** within this scope is uniquely our own. Existing in-depth studies on medieval Troy tend to concentrate on only one literary tradition and its sources, favouring a clearly coherent corpus of texts.[69] The strength of this volume lies in the opposite approach: it tackles one central theme, cross-culturally analysing sample texts and case studies from the different traditions, and without aiming to be exhaustive; thus, the transnational relevance of our research question is highlighted while the results point at a wide range of potential answers in the various literary traditions under scrutiny. Our choice to focus on Troy's medieval **dealings with the ancient supernatural**, mythological and polytheistic traditions brings up the impact of Christianisation as a major ideological theme for this volume.[70] Susannah Wright points out that medieval knowledge about the Trojan tradition would have been most readily available in monastic settings,[71] and Baukje van den Berg illustrates how such contexts stimulated active reflection on the ancient texts at hand.[72] All chapters in one way or

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[65] E.g. Agapitos & Mortensen 2012 (investigating the rise of medieval fiction in a wide scope of Greek, Latin, Old Norse and Serbian texts); Moore 2014 (Old French romance analysed through comparison with Byzantine literature); Cupane & Krönung 2016 (on the eastern Mediterranean as a multilingual and multicultural zone); Lodén 2021 (the influence of Old French romance in medieval Sweden).

[66] Chapters 1, 2, 4 and 7 of this volume.

[67] Chapter 5 of this volume.

[68] Chapters 3, 6 and 8 of this volume.

[69] E.g. Benson 1980 (on the reception of Guido delle Colonne in Middle English); Smith & Henley 2020 (on Geoffrey of Monmouth); Wilfingseder 2007 and Witalisz 2011 (both on Middle English Troy narratives); Lavagnini 2016 (on medieval Greek literature).

[70] Other ideological perspectives are adopted by e.g. Federico 2003 on "Fantasies of Empire"; Keller 2008 on "Selves and Nations".

[71] Chapter 4.1 of this volume.

[72] Chapter 5.

another show how this Christianizing influence resonates with reworked Troy characters and plot lines.[73]

If the overall goal of this volume is then to examine 'enchanted Troy reception', each of these terms carry literary-historical background and imply scholarly challenges that need to addressed. With **'ENCHANTED'**, this volume refers to the wide array of supernatural elements present in the ancient source texts as well as in the medieval literary products. The ancient tradition is mythological and embedded in a polytheistic religious system. In the most influential literary Troy traditions, this situation is so self-evident that plot-lines are necessarily influenced and partially defined by the results of a rich amalgam of supernatural powers.[74] Certain ancient authors (such as historiographers) did not support this strongly mythological approach to the Trojan War[75] and medieval literature often favoured more rationalizing accounts like those of Dictys and Dares (mentioned above).[76] However, the challenge remained that many mythological names, creatures and concepts were part of the tradition, but had become plainly alien to this new medieval audience. One strategy to address this was to consider how elements from the ancient supernatural world related and could perhaps be translated to medieval folklore: so-called 'domestication' (see Wright).[77] On a more subliminal level, moreover, Christianity needed medieval authors, scribes and translators to reflect on the inevitable polytheistic 'paganism' in the Trojan story.[78] Questions about worship and religious practice needed to

[73] For other studies on religious appropriation, Christianisation and dealing with paganism in medieval literature, see e.g. Kirner-Ludwig 2015; Salih 2019. It also forms a central matter of interest for the ERC projects Novel Saints and Novel Echoes, hosted at Ghent University between 2014–2019 and between 2019–2024.

[74] Examples discussed in this volume include the supernatural nature of Achilles (chapter 1.2: Scheijnen), the Olympian divine apparatus (chapter 4.2: Wright), several powerful female characters from the *Odyssey* (chapter 6: Goldwyn) and Amazons (chapters 7: Hoogenboom and 8.1–8.2: Söderblom Saarela).

[75] Kim 2010, 22–46.

[76] For an extensive overview, see e.g. Merkle 1996.

[77] Chapter 4 in this volume.

[78] Such unease with the mythological tradition is tangible in, for example, chapters 1 (Scheijnen on Achilles' invulnerability), 2 (Schoess on idolatry), 3 (Hölzlhammer on the horrific ending of the Medea story), 4 (Wright of the Olympian gods and

be answered from a contemporary moral and cognitive perspective.[79] The new socio-political value system of chivalry and sovereignty formed an important framework of influence in this regard (see Hölzlhammer and Hoogenboom in this volume).[80] Gender roles and sexuality, in particular, were put under scrutiny.[81] The literary result could lie in (allegorical) exegesis, criticism, plain rewriting or even the omission of passages, characterisations, or even entire plot lines. Lilli Hölzlhammer shows how even translations within the same tradition can take different approaches, ranging from shortening problematic passages to justifying characters' behaviour by modifying their plot lines.[82] Goldwyn dedicates chapter 6 to the re-writing or un-writing of Odyssean characters. On the other hand, Eustathios also recommends actively continuing to learn from this rich inheritance (Van den Berg in this volume). On a deeper, more implicit level, this volume's 'enchanted' focus therefore extends to an investigation of the larger ideological reception of the ancient Troy story in a new socio-cultural environment, of which the ethics were crucially shaped by the religious factor of Christianisation. The answer as to how to deal with 'enchanted' reception therefore could also lie in rationalisation, de-mythologizing and disenchantment (e.g. Goldwyn and Söderblom Saarela in this volume).[83]

The second key word, **Troy**, is understood as a concept in this volume: an arsenal of interrelated myths that existed before and exists beyond any cultural production and came to comprise a scope of stories from generations *before* until decades *after* the legendary Horse. While not all equally well-known and certainly not always situated on Trojan soil in the strict

fantastical elements), 6 (Goldwyn on powerful women in the *Odyssey* story), 7 and 8 (Hoogenboom and Söderblom Saarela, both on the Amazons).

[79] E.g. idolatry (chapter 2 in this volume: Schoess) and worship more generally (chapter 4.3: Wright).

[80] Chapters 3 and 7.

[81] E.g. chapters 3 (Hölzlhammer on the emotional dynamic between Medea and Jason), 5 (Van den Berg on prudence, manhood and good monastic behaviour), 6 (Goldwyn on female agency), 7 (Hoogenboom on the Amazon Penthesilea's interaction with the knightly and courtly environment) and 8 (Söderblom Saarela on courtly love and medieval gender reflections).

[82] Chapter 3 of this volume.

[83] Chapters 6 and 8.

sense of the word, these stories as a collection form the subject of this volume. As we will see, some of the tales situated 'in the margins' of the tradition (e.g. the adventures of Jason and Medea, which are related to the first sack of Troy by the Argonauts)[84] may be more prevalent in certain medieval contexts than elements that took central stage in the ancient tradition. As the continued reception of Troy even until today shows, a crucial aspect of the story cycle's survival is that each generation selects the elements and characters most appealing for elaboration and reworking.[85] The Middle Ages, in addition to a political lens, crucially zoomed in on values such as chivalry and Christian decorum. One of the most recent waves of Troy literature in our own twenty-first century opts for a gendered focus on the often-neglected female gaze (e.g. Atwood's *Penelopiad*, Miller's *Circe*, Haynes' *A Thousand Ships* and many others).[86] As such, Troy is and remains universal intellectual property.

A related question is our understanding of the literary transmission and the exact identification of the RECEPTION of these stories. What, for example, is the exact relation of medieval scribes with the ancient tradition? As discussed above, prologues to many romances (importantly including Benoît and Guido) explicitly discuss sources: Homer is often refuted, while Dares may be highlighted as a credible eyewitness. However, prologues serve a literary purpose that seldom reflects the entire reality of reception. For example, there is rarely any awareness of transnational transmission *within* the Middle Ages. Guido's influential work adopts similar viewpoints as Benoît's, but never mentions how his own work is essentially an (adapted) translation of the latter.[87] As several contributions in this volume indeed show, the medieval approach to 'translation' is quite different from our modern understanding of the concept. Being one of the most important roads of textual transmission for the Troy tradition in the high Middle Ages as, for example, the rich transnational legacies of Benoît and Guido demonstrate, each version within this network is in important ways unique

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[84] Chapter 3 (Hölzlhammer).
[85] Kermode 1975, 44.
[86] See also chapter 6 (Goldwyn) in this volume.
[87] Barnicle 1927, 226–227. Schoess (chapter 2) and Hoogenboom (chapter 7) offer comparative studies between both works in this volume

and subject to the creativity and interpretation of the translator. Goldwyn therefore points out that translation should also be understood as a *cultural* (not only a linguistic) process.[88] Medieval translators are seen to make important interventions in content, style and length. Hölzlhammer usefully distinguishes between the 'narrator' within the text and the 'translator' who, despite adopting more or less the same story, can place his own accents.[89] Modern translation theory can, as Wright argues, be adapted to better understand textual shifts between such transmissions.[90] However, not all the materials discussed in this volume can be clearly traced to older sources. The literary inspiration for the *Seege*, for example (discussed both in this chapter and by Sophie Schoess in the next), seems to derive from a "fluid amalgam" of sources,[91] with an originality in certain passages that has thus far not been traced back to other existing material.[92] Other texts, conversely, explicitly enter into dialogue with existing literary work, for example to reinterpret it. Van den Berg offers a reading of Eustathios and Homer in this regard.[93] This brings us to an important question on the other side of the reception process: the various audiences of medieval Troy texts. While this first chapter of the volume opens with a minstrel song, ample other socio-cultural contexts, such as the study of Troy in a monastic setting (Wright, Van den Berg),[94] the relevance of this literature to royal courts (Hölzlhammer, Goldwyn, Hoogenboom)[95] or a female readership (Söderblom Saarela)[96] are also taken into consideration. Importantly, such audiences had not only text available, but also illuminations to enrich the new interpretations of the story (as Schoess discusses).[97] Even the modern scholar's gaze should be understood as an audience, as several chapters argue: our current understanding of, for

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[88] Chapter 6 of this volume.

[89] Chapter 3.1.

[90] Chapter 4.2.

[91] McDonald 2000, 183.

[92] This discussion has been summarised in Scheijnen 2023.

[93] Chapter 5 of this volume.

[94] Chapters 4 and 5.

[95] Chapters 3, 6 and 7.

[96] Chapter 8.

[97] Chapter 2.

example, gender (e.g. Goldwyn, Hoogenboom and Söderblom Saarela)[98] or racism (this chapter) necessarily influences any interpretation.

All of this leads to a rich variety of approaches to 'Enchanted Troy Reception' in this volume. The authors have been free to choose their own corpora and angles, which has led not so much to an exhaustive list of texts or approaches, but to a rich collection of in-depth studies that, as a whole, exemplifies shared theoretical interests and will hopefully stimulate future interdisciplinary dialogue. The table of contents is structured to support this aim. Rather than grouping the contributions by obvious parameters such as chronology, language tradition or geographical location, we have chosen a conceptual order in which each chapter has an associated link with the previous and following chapters, based on a common view, a similar angle or a question they share.

In the next (second) chapter of the volume, **Schoess** investigates "Pagan idols and Christian anxieties in medieval Troy narratives". It shares with this chapter an interest in prejudices against contemporary Islam in the Middle English tradition. The third chapter, by **Hölzlhammer**, shifts focus to the German tradition, with "Narrating and translating Medea in medieval romances: Narrative strategies in Greek, medieval Latin, and Middle High German translations of the Roman de Troie." Translation theory forms a methodological pillar in both this study and the next, by **Wright**. "Troy translated, Troy transformed: Rewriting the *Aeneid* in medieval Ireland" points out the literary importance of the monastic context, which immediately connects it to the chapter by **Van den Berg** on "Athena disenchanted: Eustathios of Thessalonike on Ethical and Rhetorical Prudence in Homer and Beyond". Eustathios' intellectual appeal to adopt an active learning spirit when consuming ancient texts, is carefully balanced by the next chapter's focus on rather more invasive literary practices in Byzantine culture. **Goldwyn** discusses "The sexual politics of myth: Rewriting and unwriting women in Byzantine accounts of the Trojan War". It shares an interest in manifestations of misogyny and gender rewritings with Hilke **Hoogenboom**, who focusses on "Penthesilea and the Last Stand of Chivalry in Guido delle Colonne's Historia Destructionis Troiae".

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[98] Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

That the Amazons draw special attention in the Middle Ages, connects this chapter to the last of the volume: with "Disenchanted reception: Amazonian diversities in medieval receptions of myth", Ellen **Söderblom Saarela** offers a concluding reflection on several recurring themes that have been broached in the other contributions. Between myth and stories de-mythologised, between enchanted reception and disenchantment, it is precisely the multitude of potential significances and new meanings that this volume hopes to demonstrate for the enormous literary playground that the high Middle Ages from Ireland to Byzantium (and beyond) have provided.

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Pagan Idols and Christian Anxieties in Medieval Troy Narratives

A. Sophie Schoess

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I N HIS *TROY BOOK*,[1] John Lydgate describes the temple of Apollo at Delphi/Delos as symbolic of the pagan world of Greco-Roman antiquity.[2] The building itself is sizeable ("large", "longe"), indicating both the physical space it claims and the cultural importance it holds. The emphasis on its age ("olde") highlights that the Greek heroes, much like the medieval English reader, are engaging with an ancient religious tradition. More important than the sacred building, however, is the image it houses, to which Lydgate initially refers as a "statue", then as an "ydole":

[1] Lydgate composed this poem, a translation and adaptation of Guido's *History of the destruction of Troy* ("compyle, and after Guydo make, / So as I coude": Lydgate, *Troy Book* prologue 109–10) between 1412 and 1420 at the behest of Henry (Henry V), the "worthy prynce of Walys" (Lydgate, *Troy Book* prologue 102). On Lydgate's treatment of paganism in the *Troy Book*, see, e.g., Salih 2019, 33–72; on his engagement with imagery and idolatry more broadly, see, e.g., Gayk 2010, 84–122.

[2] There are some inconsistencies between the texts discussed in this chapter, but there is a general conflation of the temples and oracles of Apollo at Delphi and Delos. I therefore refer to them as Delphi/Delos throughout.

And in his temple large, longe, and olde,

Þer was a statue al of purid golde,

Ful gret and hiȝe, & of huge weiȝte,

And þer-in was, þoruȝ þe deuels sleiȝte,

A spirit vnclene, be false illusioun,

Þat ȝaf answere to euery question—

Nat þe ydole, dovmbe as stok or stoon.

And þus þe peple, deceyued euerychon,

Were by þe fend brouȝt in gret errour,

To done worschip & swyche false honour,

With sacrifise & cursed mawmentrie.

And in his [Apollo's] temple, large, long, and old, there was a statue [made] entirely of gold, large and tall, and weighty, and in it was, through the devil's deceit, an unclean spirit, a deceptive illusion, that answered every question—not, though, the idol [itself], dumb as stick or stone. And so the people, all deceived, were led into great error by the fiend, to worship and give such false honour through sacrifice and cursed mammetry.[3]

This cult-statue, so Lydgate tells us, is substantial in terms of both its dimensions ("ful gret and hiȝe") and its material composition ("al of purid golde" and "of huge weiȝte"). Yet despite its emphatic physicality, this statue is lifeless ("dovmbe as stok or stoon") and not, as its pagan worshippers believe, a manifestation of the god Apollo. Instead, an unclean spirit ("spirit vnclene"), driven by the devil ("þoruȝ þe deuels sleiȝte"), inhabits the object. This spirit's ability to communicate deceives the pagan worshippers ("euerychon") and ensures their continued devotion,[4] expressed through "worschip", "false honour", "sacrifise", and "mawmentrie".

Factual description of pagan ritual in relation to cult statues ("worschip", "honour", and "sacrifise") is here accompanied by Christian judgement: not

[3] John Lydgate, *Troy Book* 2.5469–79. The Middle English text follows Bergen 1906; the translation is my own.

[4] Though "euerychon" could be understood to mean all people, pagans and non-pagans alike, both the immediate context and the subsequent discussion of idolatry make it clear that this refers to pagans and other non-Christian worshippers only.

only is the honour given to the god and his statue "false", but it also constitutes idolatry. Lydgate, however, does not here use the term "ydolatrie" or any of its cognates, but "mawmentrie" to express this. In so doing, he reflects a contemporary tendency in Western European literature and thought to amalgamate other, distinct religions into a single non-Christian one.[5] Closely linked in the Christian mind from Late Antiquity onward with the pagan religions of the Greco-Roman world,[6] the crime of idolatry is in the Middle Ages, at least literarily, superimposed onto contemporary Islam,[7] either out of ignorance or out of wilful disregard for this religion's own rejection of the use of images in religious contexts.

This passage from Lydgate encapsulates three different cultural and literary strands that run through medieval Troy narratives: first, the adaptation of classical myth to reflect contemporary cultural ideas and ideals, an overarching aspect of Christian reception of Greco-Roman culture; second, the use of Greco-Roman myth to explore differences between the pagan heritage of the classical world and its Christian heirs, and to reflect on specific issues defining and troubling Christianity; and third, the use of classical narrative to perpetuate and reinforce religious stereotypes through moralising interpretations, allegories, and false equivalences.

In what follows, I trace references to idolatry from their most basic forms in Dictys of Crete's *Journal of the Trojan War* and Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie*, via Guido delle Colonne's highly influential excursus on the subject in his *History of the Destruction of Troy*, to Middle English variations on the theme in the anonymous *Seege of Troye* and Lydgate's *Troy Book* with which this chapter began.[8] Throughout, I focus on the verbal and descriptive markers that connote idolatry for a Christian audience, regardless of

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[5] See, e.g., Bray 1984.

[6] As in Guido's work, idolatry is here linked with Greece and Rome alongside Egypt and Assyria (*Troy Book* 2.5480–924; *History* 10).

[7] The link with Islam is initially drawn implicitly through the figure of Ishmael, ancestor of Mohammed: "But as Þe Iewes recorde of Ysmael, / Þat he was first Þat mawmentrie fonde" (*Troy Book* 5510–1); compare Guido's lines discussed below, p. 39–42.

[8] This chapter does not aim to provide a comprehensive study of all treatments of idolatry in medieval Troy narratives, but rather focuses on a few case studies that both illustrate the continued engagement with the subject through the Trojan myth and demonstrate the subject's potential for fuelling religious prejudice and persecution.

whether or not the subject is explicitly addressed. Manuscript illuminations depicting pagan worship in medieval Troy narratives highlight the visual quality of these literary markers and illustrate the weight they carry for the Christian reader. The Troy narratives, I argue, serve as vehicles for Christian reflection on the concept of idolatry and on Christianity's complicated relationship with it. Once the connection between Troy narratives and pagan idolatry is established explicitly in Guido's work, it can then be exploited to link Greco-Roman paganism and Islam through the charge of idolatry,[9] as is the case in the Middle English texts discussed here. Within the narrative world of medieval Troy, the cultural-linguistic link between idolatry and Islam, encapsulated in the term "mammetry" and its cognates, is then used to disparage two distinct religious systems with the same derogatory language and imagery.

2.1 IDOLATRY AND CHRISTIANITY

Before turning to the analysis of other literary treatments of the Troy narrative, it is important to contextualise their representation of pagan idolatry. The relationship between the divine, images, and human veneration of both has been a point of contention throughout the history of the Abrahamic religions.[10] Though this chapter deals explicitly with Christian attitudes toward idolatry, the concept itself and its rejection are, of course, very much part of the older Jewish tradition, and are inherited by Christianity and Islam. Already in Late Antiquity, the physical remains of Greco-Roman antiquity, reminders of the pagan religions and cultures that had created them, fuelled Christian anxieties over the correct engagement with this past, especially with regard to the temples and cult statues associated with pagan religious practices, including idolatry.[11] Laws recorded in the *Theodosian Code* indicate that an effort was made to preserve these places and objects

[9] See, e.g., Jones 1942; Daniel 1960, 338–43; Bray 1984; Camille 1989, 129–64; Flori 1992; Strickland 2003, 165–72; Akbari 2009, 200–47 on medieval representations of Islam as an idolatrous religion; on literary treatments of the Saracens more broadly, see, e.g., Turner 2019; cf. Scarfe Beckett 2003.

[10] See Halbertal & Margalit 1992 for a detailed study of idolatry. Compare Rubiés 2006.

[11] For discussion of early Christian responses to the physical remains of the pagan past, see, e.g., Saradi-Mendelovici 1990; James 1996; Kristensen 2009 & 2013; Wiśniewski 2015.

of worship by stripping them of their religious associations and idolatrous potential, and by treating them as art for art's sake.[12]

While biblical narratives of idolatry tend to focus on the false image of the Judaeo-Christian god idols represent, the false worship of him they incite, and the creation of additional false gods they initiate,[13] the early Church Fathers were often more concerned with the origins of idolatry and false worship in pagan religion. The ubiquity of the pagan heritage and the continuation of pagan religious practices and education in Late Antiquity allowed for a more distanced approach to the question of idolatry: using pagan narratives, beliefs, and rituals as exempla of false worship, the early Church Fathers were able to teach their Christian audiences about idolatry without necessarily focusing on their own practices.[14] In his *Divine Institutes*, for instance, Lactantius first draws attention to the false religion of the pagans (Book 1), the origins of their erroneous beliefs (Book 2), and the mistaken ideas of pagan philosophy (Book 3), before introducing the truth, wisdom, justice, and worship of Christianity (Books 4–6) and the idea of a blissful life under God (Book 7).[15] Augustine of Hippo, in turn, highlights the emptiness of the pagan idols and the pagans' mistaken belief that these idols host the deities they represent. The difficulty arising from these idols' emptiness is that pagan worshippers have no control over the spirits that ultimately animate the image: since the gods are false, the spirits entering their idols are not benevolent gods, but opportunistic demons,[16] as Lydgate highlights in the opening passage.

The materiality of these idols, empty and lifeless as they are, is key to understanding medieval Christian attitudes toward idolatry. As in Lydgate's description of the statue of Apollo at Delphi/Delos, the richness of

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[12] E.g., *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.8, 15, 19. See, e.g., Hunt 1993 (2010) for discussion of the code's role in "Christianising" the Roman Empire.

[13] As Halbertal and Margalit demonstrate, idolatry can be considered from different angles: false beliefs about God can lead to idolatry, just as the worship of images can lead to false beliefs (Halbertal & Margalit 1992).

[14] See Salih 2015, 15; see also Fradenburg 2002.

[15] See, e.g., Gassman 2020.

[16] E.g., Augustine, *The City of God* 3.104–6, 120–2, 8.23–4. See Salih 2015, 18–9 for discussion. See Ando 2001 on Augustine's treatment of idols in a philosophical context. Compare Binder 2012 on Tertullian's approach to idolatry.
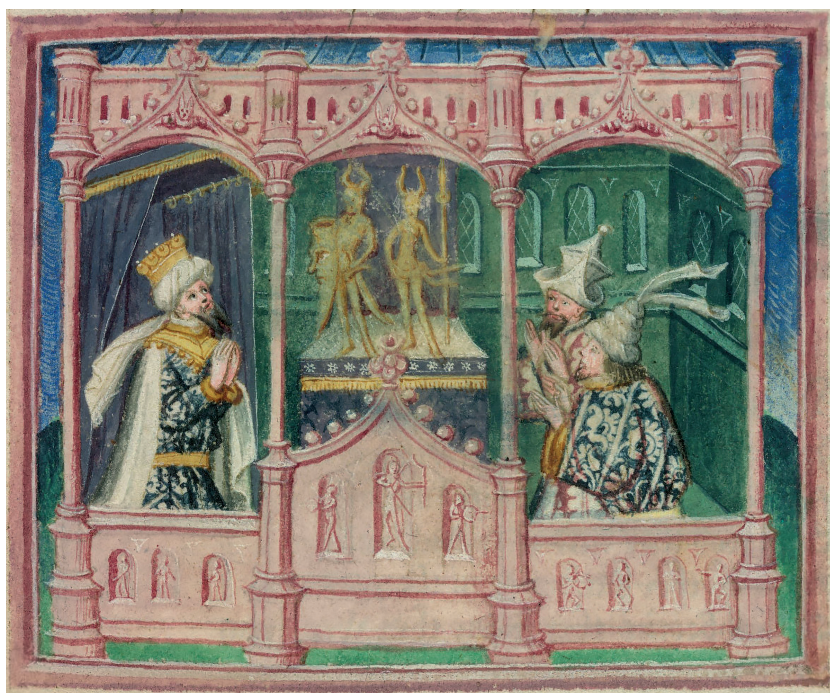
FIGURE 1: Lothbrok, king of the Danes, and his sons Hinguar and Hubba worship idols. Miniature from a fifteenth-century manuscript of Lydgate's *Lives of Saints Edmund and Fremund*. Image: courtesy of the British Library Board, British Library, Harley MS 2278, 39r.

the materials, often precious metals, used to manufacture images of the divine is suggestive of their potential use as idols.[17] Once it has been crafted by human hand, though, the image requires human interaction, such as the "worschip", "false honour", and "sacrifise" in Lydgate's narrative, to become an idol whose treatment constitutes idolatry. In the medieval iconography (e.g., fig. 1), the act of prostration before the idol and gestures of prayer directed toward it are common signs of idolatry; indeed it is the worshippers who tend to drive the visual narrative of idolatry,[18] not the idol itself. In addition, medieval iconography visually supports the idea that evil spirits inhabit idols by giving these images demonic aspects, such as ugly faces and

[17] Salih 2015, 17. See also Camille 1989, 27–49; Meier 2003.
[18] Salih 2015, 22.

demonic expressions, even devilish horns, and, in some instances, by making them appear to move between panels in response to worship.[19]

For Christians, these pagan objects in many ways evoke biblical concerns over idolatry, neatly linking images, false worship, and false religion. At the same time, though, Christian ideas around the potential animation of these idols, their being entered and inhabited by demonic forces, suggest that they pose a threat not only to their intended pagan audiences, but also to Christian viewers. Indeed, a fundamentally human belief that images hold power over the viewer underlies much of this discourse.[20] As a result, movements to suppress idolatry are as often driven by a fear of the image and its power over the viewer and by a desire to strip it of this power, as they are by the impulse to denounce and dismantle the worship of images.[21] Christians thus used pagan exempla to illustrate the dangers of idolatry, its association with devil worship, and its incompatibility with Christianity, but they also recognised that the dangerous and demonic potential of images required continuous active resistance from a Christian audience.[22] Narratives, such as those of the Trojan War, served as reminders of the idolatrous practices of the religious other and simultaneously posed a religious problem for a Christian audience: the pagan past whose stories were being consumed by Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages was rife with false religion and worship, and thus needed to be treated with care and critical detachment.

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[19] Salih 2015, 20. See below pp. 33–4 and 39.

[20] On the power of images more broadly, see, e.g., Freedberg 1989.

[21] E.g., Freedberg 1989, 378–428; compare Salih 2015.

[22] Compare Constantine Manasses' treatment of the Troy narrative in his *Chronicle,* where King David refuses to join the Trojans fearing lest his people be driven into idolatry by the pagan allies: "But David did not give it [an alliance] to him [Priam], either because at this time he stood in battle array against tribes of alien speech, or because he loathed the Greeks and barbarians as those who did not know God, but were idolaters, and feared that the Jews would be led astray if they were to be sent by him as allies to those in Troy because they are by nature easily led towards evil" (1360–66). Cf. the medieval Irish narrative *How Samson Slew the Gesteda*, which has Helenus request support from Samson; see Ehrmantraut 2022 for discussion.

Emphasising the relative scarcity of references to divinities in Dictys of Crete, Dares the Phrygian, and Benoît is a commonplace in the scholarship on medieval Troy narratives.[23] All three authors clearly focus on the human action, introducing divinities only in the context of human beliefs and worship. These scenes, moreover, are described without much investment or commentary, drawing attention instead to the ways in which the human act of worship adds to the overall narrative. At the same time, even unimpassioned descriptions of basic pagan rituals involving cult-images are easily read as constituting idolatry by Christian audiences;[24] the cultural context of the reader in many ways defines how any interaction between pagan character and pagan divinity or statue is understood. In the case of medieval Troy stories, the earliest and, in many ways, most neutral examples still lay the foundation for later discourse on pagan idolatry in the narrative context of the Trojan War.[25]

In his *Journal of the Trojan War*,[26] Dictys describes Chryses' approaching the Greek ships to negotiate the return of his daughter, Astynome. As priest of Apollo, Chryses trusts in the power of the god and in the Greeks' veneration of him, but still uses distinct paraphernalia to ensure his safety and respect:

> Per idem tempus Chryses ... fretus religione tanti numinis ad naves venit, praeferens dei vultus ac quaedam ornamentorum templi eius, quo facilius recordatione praesentis numinis veneratio sui regibus incuteretur.

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[23] E.g., Benson 1980, 4.

[24] At times, this reception is reflected only in the use of distinct vocabulary. The Middle Irish *Togail Troi*, an adaptation of Dares' *The Fall of Troy: A History*, for instance, repeatedly uses terms such as "develish gods" and "idols" to refer to pagan gods and their cult images, and explains 'pagan' or 'heathen' cult- and burial-practices as distinctly non-Christian; see, e.g., Meyer 1980, 215–17. See Ehrmantraut (forthcoming) for a broader discussion of the treatment of the Olympian gods in the first and second recensions of *Togail Troi*. Chapter 4 in this volume discusses another Middle Irish Troy narrative focusing on divine and fantastic elements.

[25] See below, p. 32–34.

[26] On the complex history of the work's composition and translation, see, e.g., Ní Mheallaigh 2013; Bär 2018; Gómez Peinado 2018.

At the same time, Chryses ... trusting in the *religio* of such a great divine power [Apollo] went to the ships, carrying before him an image of the god and some of the decorations of his temple, in order to instil more easily in the kings reverence toward him through the manifestation of his divine presence.[27]

While Chryses is explicitly relying on Apollo's divine power ("fretus religione"), it is the physical manifestation of the god—his likeness ("vultus") and the decorations from his temple ("ornamenta")—that is emphasised here. Through bringing a physical reminder of the god's presence ("recordatio praesentis numinis") Chryses seeks to arouse the Greeks' desire to worship Apollo ("veneratio") and to honour his priest.

At no point does Dictys explicitly invoke the idea of idolatry,[28] nor does he use language that explicitly connotes idolatrous qualities to describe the statue. At the same time, his emphasis on the power of the image and the god's wealth as a driving force in the Greeks' religious behaviour would have resonated with late-antique and medieval Christian audiences, who would have seen in this description signs of idolatry regardless of the author's intention. Dictys' dispassionate description of pagan religious attitudes and practices—the respect afforded priests, the implied veneration of a god's image, the display of divine material wealth—is easily translated into a commentary on pagan idolatry: Chryses believes a lifeless object to hold religious power and anticipates its worship by other pagans. In treating the object as a manifestation of divinity, Chryses and the Greeks—with the exception of Agamemnon—imbue this object with power over them, believing it to be able to punish impious action. While Dictys does not describe the actual veneration of the image, the audience is primed to expect physical displays of worship, including the kneeling before and praying to the statue, as well as sacrifices made in the presence of the god's image.

The simple presence of pagan religious ritual in narratives such as this allows for, and may perhaps even be seen to invite, the exploration of pagan attitudes toward religious iconography and Christian responses to it. That

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[27] Dictys, *Journal of the Trojan War* 2.28. The Latin text is from Eisenhut 1994; the translation is my own.

[28] To go into questions about the origins of Dictys' work or indeed his own religious affiliations is far beyond the scope of this chapter.

Dictys does not engage with the subject of idolatry himself is irrelevant, I would argue, when a Christian audience receives the text and interprets it within its own cultural parameters.[29] The enduring influence of the early Church Fathers' discourse on paganism, idolatry, and Christian responses to the Greco-Roman heritage looms large in the reception history of the Troy narrative and its depictions of religious observances. Even seemingly god-less retellings of the myth such as Dares' and Dictys' can thus serve to remind the Christian reader of the idolatrous tendencies of the received cultures and to encourage later writers to engage critically and extensively with the subject.

Indeed, in Benoît's *Roman de Troie*,[30] based as it is on the works of Dares and Dictys, we already see a slight shift in the language, moving closer to explicit signs and invocations of idolatry. Unlike most of the examples in this chapter, Benoît does not describe an idol associated with the god Apollo and its veneration by the Greeks here, but rather an image of Jupiter, held in the highest honour by the Trojans:

> L'image al deu qu'il plus creeient,
> Ou il greignor fiance aveient,—
> C'ert Jupiter li deus poissanz,—
> Cel fist faire li reis Prianz
> Del meillor or qu'il onques ot
> Ne que il onques trover pot.
> Grant seürté e grant fiance
> I avaient e atendance,
> Que par ço fussent defendu,
> Ne ja ne fussent mais vencu,

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[29] The principle that the reader's horizon of expectation (*Erwartungshorizont,* i.e., the background a reader brings to a text) plays a central role in the creation of meaning is an influential one in classical reception studies; see, e.g., Martindale 1993 and Martindale & Thomas 2006. As Salih 2015 demonstrates, the ubiquity of the discourse on idolatry in the Middle Ages would have shaped the medieval Christian reader's horizon of expectation and therefore their understanding of such passages.

[30] The poem was written between 1154 and 1160.

Ne mais destruite lor contree:

Mais n'ert pas tel la destinee.

The statue was of the mighty god Jupiter, in whom their faith was strongest and in whom they had the greatest trust; Priam had had it made using the finest gold he ever possessed or could ever find. They had great trust and faith in it, and they expected that through it they would be protected and never again be vanquished or have their country destroyed. But that was not their destiny.[31]

This seems at first sight to be a foreboding pronouncement ("mais n'ert pas tel la destinee") following a simple *ekphrasis* of the cult object and comment on its material and cultural value. It is a golden image of a supreme god which the Trojans believe will offer them protection. But these seemingly innocuous details conform to the kinds of tropes a contemporary Christian audience would immediately recognise as signs of idolatry: the object is crafted by human hand ("fist faire—reis Prianz"), is made of precious materials ("del meillor or"), and is believed to have powers of its own and through this belief is animated in the minds of its worshippers. Again, Benoît does not state that this worship constitutes idolatry, but writing in the cultural and religious *milieu* of twelfth-century France, he is undoubtedly aware of the weight of his language, as is his contemporary audience.

Manuscript illustrations attached to the *Roman de Troie* (e.g., fig 2) make the connection between descriptions of pagan temples and worship in the text and the sin of idolatry explicit. The cult statue is here represented conspicuously in golden colour and in a rather unusual seated position. It is of ugly, even demonic, appearance, and it appears to communicate with the worshippers through changing gestures. The human figures, in turn, are shown to worship the idol through prostration and gestures of prayer. Taking the narrative and its illumination together it becomes clear that a medieval Christian audience would easily have connected the coded language of the text, the distinct iconography of the illustrations, and the ongoing Christian discourse concerning idolatry in Benoît's work. At the same time,

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[31] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 3123–34. The French text is taken from Constans 1904, the translation is from Burgess & Kelly 2017.

FIGURE 2: The Greeks worship Apollo. Miniature accompanying the text of Benoît's *Roman de Troie*. Illuminated manuscript dating to 1325–1330. Image: courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, Français 60, 63r.

by relying on his audience's ability to recognise these verbal and visual cues rather than on offering his own explication, Benoît is able to maintain a sense of religious detachment and a focus on the romance narrative, while still drawing attention to the idolatrous nature of paganism.

2.3 SHIFTING THE FOCUS:
GUIDO'S EXCURSUS ON THE ORIGINS OF IDOLATRY

In his *History of the destruction of Troy*,[32] Guido delle Colonne purports to follow the historical accounts of Dictys and Dares: "those things which [were related] by Dictys the Greek and Dares the Phrygian … having been transcribed by me, Judge Guido delle Colonne of Messina".[33] As has long been recognised, however, Guido's main source for the Trojan War narrative

[32] Guido completed the work in 1287 after working on it for less than three months, "that is from the fifteenth of September of the first indiction until the twenty-fifth of the following November" (Guido, *History* liber ultimus: "a xva uidelicet mensis Septembris prime iudiccionis usque ad xxv mensis Nouembris proxime"). The Latin text is taken from Griffin 1936; the translation from Meek 1974.

[33] Guido, *History* i: "Ea que per Dytem Grecum et Frigium Darentem… per me iudicem Guidonem de Columpna de Messana transsumpta".

is Benoît's *Roman de Troie*, which he strips of its more narrative character and frames with historiographical notes and clear references to his sources.[34] Crucial to Guido's understanding of his role as historian is his sense of responsibility to dismantle, for the benefit of his readers, narratives that depict pagan worship and belief uncritically, a strategy that builds on the works of early Christian historians such as Augustine.[35]

Guido's emphatic rejection of pagan worship runs through the work as a whole, but is particularly prominent in his excursus on the origins of idolatry in Book 10 of the *History*,[36] which interrupts the narrative of the Greeks' consultation of the Apolline oracle at Delphi/Delos, the same scene as in the Lydgate passage with which this chapter began. Yet even the introductory description of the island of Delos and its relationship with Apollo and Diana is indicative of Guido's "unfailingly severe attitude toward pagan religious beliefs."[37] Before the Greeks even reach Delphi/Delos, Guido tells us that the pagans not only call Apollo a god ("hunc gentiles Appollinem deum esse dixerunt"), but also grant him various other names (Phoebus / "Febus", Ephoebus / "Effebus", Pythias / "Phytus") and identities (Titan / "Tytan", the sun / "sol"),[38] signalling that their belief is a false one ("errores"). Indeed, Guido links the oracle of the Pythia ("phytonisse") with the biblical story of the Witch of Endor,[39] drawing attention to the dark magic inhabiting the

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[34] For a detailed introduction to Guido's life and work, see Meek 1974, esp. xix–xxi on his delayed engagement with Dares.

[35] Meek 1974, xvi.

[36] Where other versions, such as Joseph of Exeter's *Ylias* and the prose *Roman de Troie* include brief introductions to the subject of idolatry, Guido expands on it in unprecedented fashion, drawing on a variety of source texts including Isodore of Seville, Petrus Comestor, the legend of St Brendan, and the Bible (Meek 1974, xxv). See Fradenburg 2002, 35–40 on Guido's excursus in context.

[37] Meek 1974, xvi.

[38] Guido expands on this in his excursus, highlighting that pagan gods such as Jupiter and Mercury are named after planets and obtain additional power through that association: "Jupiter seu Iouis adeptus est nomen planete Iouis et illum gentiles coluerunt" (Guido, *History* 10).

[39] In the *Septuagint*, she is called the "ventriloquist of Aendor" (*engastrimythos en Aendōr*: I Samuel 28), highlighting the trickery of this kind of oracular figure. The Latin Vulgate, in turn, refers to her as "mulier pythonem habens in Endor", drawing a link to the Pythia of Delphi (compare Isodore, *The Etymologies* VIII.ix.7, 21). Guido is

pagan sanctuary and invoking the long-standing Judaeo-Christian rejection of it.

Before turning to Guido's treatment of Apollo's oracle and its manifestation in the form of a cult image, I wish to draw attention to the swiftness with which his sources pass over the scene. In his *The Fall of Troy: A History*, Dares describes the oracular consultation in two sentences: "When Achilles had arrived at Delphi, he proceeded to the oracle: and from the adyton came the answer that the Greeks would be victorious and take Troy in the tenth year. Achilles performed the divine rites (*res divinas*) as instructed."[40] All Dares offers his readers in terms of religious observation is that Achilles approached the oracle, learned its message, and performed divine rites as required. The reader is not even told what these "res divinas" constitute.

As could already be seen in the comparison between Dictys and Benoît, the *Roman de Troie* gives more room to the description of pagan temples, images, worship, and beliefs. The direct comparison with Dares shows that the French version already offers a few more hints of idolatrous behaviour, though it, too, does not comment on it:

> Par le comun esguart de toz,
> I vait danz Achillès li proz.
> Patroclus meine ensemble o lui:
> En Delfon vindrent ambedui.
> Senz eschars faire e senz nul ris
> Entrent el temple Apollinis;
> O crieme e o devocion
> Firent al deu lor oreison.
> Un sacrefise apareillié
> A Achillès sacrefiié.

clearly building on these existing associations between witchcraft and pagan oracles, but he takes it further by explicitly equating the two.

[40] Dares, *Fall of Troy* 15: "Achilles cum Delphos venisset, ad oraculum pergit: et ex adyto respondetur Graecos victuros, decimoque anno Troiam capturos. Achilles res divinas, sicut imperatum est, fecit". The Latin text is from Meister 1873; the translation is my own.

By general agreement, the worthy Achilles went to Delphi, taking Patroclus with him. These two men came to Delphi, where, without mockery or laughter, they entered Apollo's temple. Fearfully and devoutly, they made their supplication to the god while Achilles was offering a fitting sacrifice.[41]

Benoît describes the seriousness ("senz eschars faire, senz nul ris, crieme, devocion") with which Achilles and Patroclus approach the oracle, but like Dares he keeps the interaction between worshippers and oracle brief ("firent al deu lor oreison, un sacrefise sacrefiié"), though he does give room to the actual words of the god. The closest to a judgement we find in Benoît is his description of Achilles' response to the oracle: "He made obeisance to the god, thanking him and prostrating himself (*s'umelie*) before the altar".[42] While "s'umelie" is easily translated as "he prostrated himself," it also carries the meaning of debasement and could thus be read as a Christian commentary on the act of prostration before a pagan god.

Importantly, the interaction with the god in both the Latin and the French text is unmediated by an image. Guido and, by extension, Lydgate thus introduce not only the subject of idolatry, but also the idol itself into this scene. Unlike Lydgate, Guido does not dwell on the temple of Apollo, but immediately focuses on the cult statue within, describing it with explicit language and identifying it immediately as an empty pagan image of great size ("maxima ymago"), the object of idolatrous worship ("gentilium colencium ydolatriam"):

In hoc igitur templo erat maxima ymago tota ex auro composita in honore predicti dei Appollonis. Que licet fuisset ex auro composita et in ueritate fuisset surda et muta, tamen secundum gentilium errores colencium ydolatriam (que principaliter apud ipsos inualuit, cum omisissent uerum cultum Dei ueri, qui in sapientia, id est in filio Dei, domino nostro Ihesu Christo, ex nichilo cuncta creauit) adheserunt diis surdis et mutis, qui pro certo homines mortales fuerunt, credentes et putantes eos esse deos, quorum potencia nulla erat. Sed responsa que dabantur ab eis non ipsi sed qui ingrediebantur in eorum ymagines dabant, qui spiritus immundi pro

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[41] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 5791–800.

[42] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 5815–6 : "Le deu aore e sil mercie, / E devant l'autel s'umelie".

certo erant, ut per eorum responsa homines in perpetuis errorum cecitatibus con-
seruarent.

> In this temple there was a very great image all made of gold in honor of this god
> Apollo. Although it was made of gold, and in truth was deaf and dumb, still the
> pagans, according to their error, embracing idolatry (which chiefly prevailed among
> them because they lacked the true worship of the true God, who in His Wisdom,
> that is, in the Son of God, Our Lord Jesus Christ, created all things of nothing),
> clung to the worship of deaf and dumb gods, who assuredly had been mortal men,
> believing and considering that those who had no power were gods. But the answers
> which were given by them were given not by them but by those who walked about
> in their images, who were surely unclean spirits, so that through their answers men
> were kept in the perpetual blindness of error.[43]

The first note Guido strikes here is again that of materiality: the image is the
product of human craft and conspicuous wealth ("tota ex auro composite"),
a fact he repeats already in the second sentence. Next, he draws his read-
er's attention to the fact that such objects, regardless of their worshippers'
beliefs, are lifeless ("surda et muta") just like the gods they represent ("diis
surdis et mutis"). When it comes to the statue's role in the dissemination
of Apollo's oracles, Guido goes beyond the kinds of invocations of idola-
try seen in his sources: he is concerned not only with the pagans' mistaken
belief in the object's power ("gentilium errores colencium ydolatriam; cre-
dentes et putantes eos esse deos"), but also with the object itself: its very
emptiness allows it to host unclean spirits ("spiritus immundi") who move
freely within the image ("qui ingrediebantur in eorum ymagines").

The error of idolatry is linked with a lack of understanding of Chris-
tian religion ("cum omisissent uerum cultum Dei ueri") and the truth it
represents. Guido here makes explicit not just the fact that pagans commit
idolatry, but also the idea that Christianity offers the only way out of this
erroneous belief system and cult practice. In so doing, he highlights the im-
portance idolatry and its rejection hold for Christian identity and self-un-
derstanding, and illustrates the imperative that Christians distance them-

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[43] Guido, *History* 10.

selves explicitly from such practices and, by extension, from paganism more broadly, regardless of their appreciation for the cultural and literary heritage associated with it.

Illuminations from a fourteenth-century manuscript of Guido's text (figs 3 and 4) illustrate not only the material aspects of the cult statue and its veneration, but also the demonic core to which Guido attests: the statue appears to move between images and its changing gestures suggest communication. The idolatry of the pagans is thus depicted clearly, as it is in other illuminations, but the active demonic response of this particular statue is foregrounded. The error of the pagans is here shown to be self-perpetuating: by prostrating themselves before and praying to the idol, the pagan worshippers incite demonic spirits to take up residence in the empty image. The spirits, in turn, encourage the continued idol-worship by communicating with the pagans and thus keep alive their mistaken belief in the god Apollo, his oracle, and his image.

In treating this Delphi/Delos episode as indicative of the idolatrous nature of pagan worship and belief, Guido primes his reader for the excursus on the origins of idolatry, its association with the paganism of antiquity, and its refutation and elimination through Christ. The Trojan narrative is here reframed as a teaching tool: it instructs the reader in how to read pagan narratives critically and in how to use this reading to reflect on the differences between pagan and Christian ritual and belief.[44] As Guido's Christian audience already knows, the idols of pagan gods are at once empty and lifeless objects and powerful receptors for actual demonic forces who capitalise on the emptiness of the vessel and its veneration by worshippers. Guido's Apollo thus perfectly exemplifies the dangers and ambiguities inherent in idols and idol worship, and allows him to reflect on the complicated relationship between religious imagery and idolatry, and between idols, the gods they represent, and the demons that actually inhabit them.

The excursus, in turn, focuses on the origins of idolatry, though Guido actually begins with the end of the practice ("all the idolatry in the world ceased on all sides")[45] in the coming of Christ ("through the glorious coming

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[44] Cf. Salih 2015, 15.
[45] Guido, *History* 10: "ubique terrarum ydolatria tota cessauerit".

FIGURE 3: The Greeks worship the idol of Apollo at Delphi/Delos. Miniature accompanying the text of Book 10 of Guido's *History*. Fourteenth-century manuscript from Venice, Italy; miniature by Giustino da Forlì. Image: courtesy of Fondation Martin Bodmer, Geneva, Cod. Bodmer 78, f. 29v.

of Our Lord Jesus Christ"),[46] emphasising the difference between the pagan origins and perpetuation of idolatry, and the Christian elimination of it. The end of idolatry is linked with the biblical narrative of the flight to Egypt, one of the centres of ancient paganism and idolatry.[47] It is only once the reader has been reminded of the role of Christianity in the dismantling of pagan religions that Guido turns to various origin stories, beginning with the biblical one, according to which Ishmael was the first to create an idol ("the Jews say Ishmael fashioned the first image from clay").[48] Traditionally seen as progenitor of the Arabs and later of Mohammed himself, Ishmael and, by extension, the Ishmaelites are frequently associated with idolatry

[46] Guido, *History* 10 : "aduentum domini nostri Ihesu Christi".

[47] See, e.g., Camille 1989, 1–24 on Egypt, idolatry, and the fall of the idols in visual representations and religious thought.

[48] Guido, *History* 10: "Iudei dicunt quod Ismael primo simulachrum de luto fecisse".

FIGURE 4: The Greeks meet Calchas at the Temple of Apollo at Delphi/Delos. Miniature accompanying the text of Book 10 of Guido's *History*. Fourteenth-century manuscript from Venice, Italy; miniature by Giustino da Forlì. Image: courtesy of Fondation Martin Bodmer, Geneva, Cod. Bodmer 78, f. 31r.

in Jewish and Christian writings.[49] While Guido does not draw explicit links between idolatry and Islam, he will have been aware of contemporary representations of Islam as an idolatrous religion. Indeed, the early mention of Ishmael suggests that he, much like Lydgate, is invoking contemporary discourse about the alleged idolatrous nature of Islam and is inviting his audience to draw the same connection. The Jewish narrative about Ishmael

[49] For further discussion of the various links drawn between Ishmael, Islam, and idolatry, see, e.g., Hawting 2010; Grypeou-Spurling 2013, 239–88; Poorthuis 2013; Firestone 2018; Navarro 2022.

is then contrasted with its pagan counterpart in which Prometheus invents the clay effigy ("the pagans say dogmatically that Prometheus made the first image from clay").[50]

Interestingly, Guido draws a distinction between Ishmael's and Prometheus' creation of idols and the origins of their worship, between the empty object itself and its transformation into an idol through human error and adoration. The latter Guido situates in Assyria, where King Ninus first used an image not only to commemorate his father, Belus, but also to worship him as a god ("coluit tamquam deum") and to force others to do the same ("coli mandauit"). It is the false belief that Belus was deified ("in celum esse deificatum") and the worship of this idol that attracts an unclean spirit ("spiritus immundus") who communicates with the Assyrians through the idol ("responsa petentibus exhibebat").[51] Following Ninus' example, other pagan peoples then create their own gods from mortals ("fingentes homines mortuos esse deos") and worship them through their idols ("gentiles processerunt ad ydolorum cultum"). The genealogies of the Greco-Roman gods presented by Guido are familiar from the writings of early Latin Church Fathers such as Lactantius, in which Olympians and lesser gods alike begin their lives as mortal men and women.[52] Importantly, Guido highlights the relationship between the creation of images, especially those commemorating or celebrating mortal men and women, the worship of these, and the creation of false beliefs. Just like the idols before which they prostrate themselves, the gods represented by these idols are the creation of pagans;[53] idolatry is thus an entirely avoidable sin, but one that is deeply ingrained in the fabric of pagan antiquity.

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[50] Guido, *History* 10: "gentiles autem primum Prometheum simulachrum de luto fecisse dogmatizauerunt". Pagans are characterised as inherently lawless and idolatrous ("they were always without the Law … serving idols from the first": "semper sine lege fuerunt … ydolis principaliter seruientes").

[51] See, e.g., Cooke 1927, 403–7 on Guido's sources.

[52] While Guido draws on a number of sources (see above, footnote 36), he does not always acknowledge them. Isodore's *Etymologies* is one of his key references for the origins of idolatry (Meek 1974, xxvi). On the early Church Fathers' euhemeristic approach to the pagan gods of Greece and Rome, see, e.g., Winiarczyk 2013, 148–54; Roubekas 2016, 115–37; DePalma Digeser & Barboza 2021.

[53] See, e.g., Camille 1989, 50–7.

Guido's excursus ends with a narrative return to Delphi/Delos. The oracular episode thus serves to frame and, indeed, to exemplify the history of idolatry, enabling the reader to comprehend the dangers inherent in reading uncritically stories about pagan antiquity:

> Per demonum igitur ingressum in ydola surda et muta eliciebantur ab eis petita responsa que tunc gentilitas excolebat. ... Et per hanc dyabolica decepcionis astuciam deus Appollo responsa sua in dicta insula Delos petentibus exhibebat.

> Demons, therefore, entered into deaf and dumb idols which the pagans then worshipped, and it was they who produced the answers being sought for ... Through the wiles of this demonic deception the god Apollo revealed his answers to the petitioners on the island of Delos.[54]

In the end, Guido leaves no doubt in his reader's mind that the oracle of Apollo speaks to its pagan worshippers, but the mechanism by which this occurs, the demonic influence, is invisible to them and can only be recognised by a Christian audience. His reader is then to reflect on the origins of idolatry and on its link with the cultures whose stories are told in Guido's work, as well as on the power the Christian god and the obligation of Christian believers to denounce and dismantle idolatry.

2.4 ANCIENT AND MODERN RELIGIOUS FOES: IDOLATRY AS MAMMETRY

Unlike Lydgate's *Troy Book*, the anonymous *Seege* or *Batayle of Troye* relies not on Guido as a source, but rather directly on Dares.[55] The text, based on a minstrel song, is dated to the first quarter of the fourteenth century and retains characteristic features of the oral tradition from which it stems.[56] Where Guido chooses the episode at the temple of Apollo at Delphi/Delos to colour pagan ritual and tradition with Christian judgement and to discuss the origins of idolatry, the anonymous composer of the *Seege* retains the narrative detachment of Dares and Benoît, though he, too, has the idol

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[54] Guido, *History* 10.

[55] See Barnicle 1927, xxxvii–lxxiv; Atwood & Whitaker 1944, xxi–lxxi; Scheijnen 2023, 346–50.

[56] Barnicle 1927, xxxiii–vii.

("mawmet") answer instead of the god or his oracle.[57] Unlike the work's Latin source, the *Seege* has Dares,[58] not Achilles, visit Delphi/Delos on behalf of the Greeks:

> Daries tok þeo tresour þat was fyn
> And ʒaf hit to þeo temple of appolyn
> And offrede as þeo maner was þo
> And feol adoun on his kneoes bo.
> "Lord appolyn, y by-seche þe
> Þat þou wole onswere me.
> ʒef we schal to bataile wende,
> How schole we spede at þeo laste eynde?"
> Þeo mawmet onswerde him afyn,
> "Goþ and werreþ by leue myn
> And loke þat ʒe no stunte nouʒt
> Til troye beo to grounde y-brouʒt
> And er þis ten ʒeir beon y-gon
> ʒe schole ouercomen heom euerychon."

Dares took the treasure that was fine and brought it to the temple of Apollo, and he offered it as was customary and fell down to his two knees. "Lord Apollo, I beseech you to answer me. If we turn to battle, how shall we succeed at the end?" The mammet answered him well, "Go and war by my leave and see to it that you do not stop till Troy is brought to the ground, and before the tenth year is gone, you shall overcome them all."[59]

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[57] Whether he is looking at Dares alone or alongside Benoît, he does not embellish the scene with a detailed description the way Guido and Lydgate do.

[58] The Arundel manuscript also has Dares ("darres") interact with Apollo, the Egerton manuscript "Eufras", and the Harley manuscript Odysseus ("Eluxes/Eluxies").

[59] *Seege* 998–1111. The Middle English (based on the Lincoln's Inn MS) text is taken from Barnicle 1927; the translation is mine. The variations in the Arundel and Egerton manuscripts for this passage are not significant for the present discussion, but are referred to below where relevant.

As in earlier versions, the visit to the oracle involves a number of pagan rituals: the Greeks offer rich dedications or sacrifice to the god ("tresour þat was fyn... offrede as þeo maner was þo"), they appeal to him in prayer or through prostration ("feol adoun on his kneoes bo"), and they rely on and believe in his oracular response. Despite not offering an active commentary on these rituals as Guido does, the *Seege* author still introduces the language of idolatry and, more importantly, of "mammetry" into the brief and dispassionate account of his source text.[60] Even without drawing on the *History*'s excursus, the *Seege* demonstrates how easily the pagan rituals in this and other episodes are classed as idolatry by a Christian audience. Drawing the verbal link between pagan idolatry and Islam through the use of the term "mammet" and its cognates, the text further reflects how deeply engrained this cultural and religious understanding is in Middle English, as it is in Western European literature more broadly at the time.

The conflation of the Greeks' paganism and contemporary Islam is not, however, restricted to such scenes of worship in the *Seege*. Achilles, for instance, though he does not take part in the expedition to Delphi/Delos, is consistently framed as the son of a witch ("his modur is a wyche, kan mukil schame"),[61] as benefitting from her dark magic ("Achilles was baþed in þe water of helle, / ffor-þy no myȝte him no mon qwelle"),[62] and as a follow-

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[60] The three closest manuscripts use varying forms of "mammet" to refer to the statue of Apollo (line 1006: "mawmet" in the Lincoln's Inn MS, "mament appolyn" in the Arundel, "mawment" in the Egerton MS), while the Harley manuscript—different in many ways from the three others—simply refers to it as "That Image of Appolyn". See Barnicle 1927, xlv–lvi for more detailed discussions of the differences between the Harley manuscript and the other three, and of the tendency of the Harley manuscript to suppress narrative embellishments associated with the romance in favour of a more classicising brevity.

[61] *Seege* 1201. The Egerton MS has: "His moder is a Wycche, can muche of shame" (*Seege* 1201); the Arundel MS simply has: "Strong he ys t kan moche schame" (*Seege* 1201); the relevant lines are missing in the Harley MS.

[62] *Seege* 1463–4; compare 1344–9. The Egerton MS has: "Achilles was bathed in þe flum of heł, / þerfore myȝt no man him quelle" (*Seege* 1463–4) The Arundel manuscript omits these lines and focuses only on the resulting hardness of Achilles' skin; the Harley MS similarly omits this passage.

er of Mohammed ("y swere, sire, by god Mahoun").[63] Both regular pagan ritual and belief, and dark magic are thus verbally linked with the prophet Mohammed, and Islam is equated with forms of idolatry and devil-worship. This idiomatic reference to the religious other perpetuates existing stereotypes and serves to connect the pagan religious elements of the Troy narrative with medieval Christian ideas about the mistaken beliefs and rituals of other contemporary religions. The *Seege* narrative thus becomes a reflection of the culture and religious *milieu* within which it was composed rather than a reflection of the culture and religious *milieu* of its source texts or, indeed, of the ancient world it represents.[64] Through language that reflects contemporary misrepresentations of Muslims or Saracens as idolatrous pagans and *vice versa*, the distinct religious cultures of Greece, Troy, and Rome are here used to perpetuate religious prejudice against Muslims, to other and to degrade them, and, by extension, to illustrate the superiority of Christianity.[65]

It is in this cultural and religious context that we must read Lydgate's treatment of the Delphi/Delos passage with which this chapter began. Lydgate's discussion of the idolatrous nature of the consultation of the oracle and of the oracle's response is obviously driven by his source text's treatment of the subject. He follows Guido not only in the description of the statue, its worship, and its deceptive oracles, but also in the disruption of his narrative to include an excursus on idolatry. Yet, while Lydgate discusses idolatry along similar lines as Guido, he infuses his narrative with the same anti-Islamic language as the author of the *Seege*. His cultural context defines the way he views idolatry as a sin not only of the ancient pagan religions, but also of Islam.

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[63] *Seege* 1334. The Arundel MS has: "By mahond mykyd mof myȝth" (*Seege* 1334); the Egerton MS has: "I swere, by my god Mahoun" (*Seege* 1334); and Harley simply has: "Be the trowth þat is myn" (*Seege* 1334). This passage is also discussed in chapter 1 of this volume. See Scheijnen 2023 for a detailed study of Thetis' and Achilles' representation in the *Seege*.

[64] Compare Scheijnen 2023.

[65] See also chapter 1.2 of this volume, where Scheijnen discusses such othering practices in more detail.

The *Seege* and Lydgate's *Troy Book* thus present us with different kinds of retellings of the Troy narrative, but they reflect both the influence of, and interest in, the material in medieval England.[66] Guido's *History* in many ways shapes the English reception of Troy in this period:[67] translated into English multiple times, it also forms the basis of Raoul le Fèvre's *Recueil des Histoires de Troie*, an English translation of which was the first English book printed by William Caxton and served as a key inspiration for Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*.[68] When considering the treatment of pagan worship and belief in medieval English retellings, Guido's excursus on idolatry is undoubtedly highly influential in associating the theme with the Trojan War narrative. Indeed, Lydgate's reception of Guido reinforces this link, but also imbues it with contemporary language that goes beyond the Latin concept of *idolatria*; it broadens the story of idolatry to include not only its origins and manifestations in antiquity, but also its purported continuation in the Mohammedan worship or "mammetry". The *Seege* similarly creates and reinforces these cultural-linguistic links, but, so far as we know, without engaging with Guido's work. What these three works demonstrate, then, is that the potential for reading pagan worship in the Troy narrative as idolatry was always present in the works of Dares, Dictys, and Benoît. A Christian audience or author adapting the story could, and indeed would, imbue their narratives with additional meaning by using them to reflect on the religious other, as much as on their own beliefs.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The popularity of Troy narratives in the Middle Ages is representative of the interest and investment in the Greco-Roman heritage and its narratives more broadly. That various Western European groups and nations looked to the Trojan War narrative for their own aetiologies further fuelled a sense of continuity and connection between medieval Christians and the ancient Greeks, Trojans, and Romans.[69] This rich cultural inheritance, however, brought with it the weight of pagan religion, its rituals, and its beliefs.

[66] On Troy narratives in medieval English literature more widely, see, e.g., Benson 1980.
[67] See, e.g., Simpson 1998.
[68] See, e.g., Cole 1980.
[69] See, e.g., Beaune 1991, 226–44, 33–345; Barlow 1995; Cohen 2004; Roeck 2004.

While Dares, Dictys, and Benoît for the most part remove the gods from their narratives, they do include scenes of worship and descriptions of their temples and images, showing how Greeks and Trojans alike look to the gods for advice, support, and protection.

A Christian readership, already in Late Antiquity, but especially in the Middle Ages, would have been able to translate such scenes and descriptions, however small or innocuous, into symbols of the false beliefs and idolatry of Greco-Roman paganism. Indeed, the ubiquity of discourses on idolatry and its association with pagan antiquity would have made a different reading almost impossible. The *Seege*'s explicit language in the otherwise unaltered narrative of Dares' Delphi/Delos scene highlights that the signs of idolatry have always been present in the core texts and are therefore easily brought to the surface by an audience primed to identify them. Guido's and Lydgate's excursus, in turn, spell out the complexities inherent in the representation of pagan idolatry and Christian responses to it. They demonstrate that the identification and rejection of idolatry are ongoing processes and that Christian audiences must assess critically the stories of pagan antiquity they consume. Illustrations, in turn, serve as visual reminders of the demonic potential of pagan imagery, and of the dangers inherent in viewing it and engaging with it uncritically.

Medieval Troy narratives, much like other forms of Christian reception of the Greco-Roman world, thus can serve as vehicles for cultural and religious expression and reflection for both the author and the reader. In embedding Christian theories about idolatry in their Troy poems and histories, authors such as Guido and Lydgate draw attention to the differences between their contemporary Christian audiences and the Greco-Roman pagans whose stories they read. They emphasise that paganism and, by extension, any non-Christian religion is driven by false beliefs and expresses them through false worship, including idolatry. Importantly, the cultural conflation of pagan idolatry and "mammetry" in medieval England and Western Europe more broadly is superimposed onto some of these later Troy narratives, perpetuating and reinforcing contemporary religious stereotypes.

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Narrating and Translating Medea in Medieval Romances

Narrative Strategies in Greek, Medieval Latin, and Middle High German Translations of the Roman de Troie

Lilli Hölzlhammer

+

Then I saw you: then I began to know what you could be: that was the first ruin of my feelings. I saw, I perished! Not with known fires I burnt, but like a pine torch burns before the great gods. And you were beautiful, and my fate dragged me away: the light of your eyes stole mine.[1]

THE SUFFERING IN Medea's love story begins in the very instance she sets her eyes on Jason, as shown by the quote from Ovid's *Heroides*. Depending on its most prominent versions by Euripides, Apollonius of Rhodes, and Ovid, Medea kills her own brother and

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[1] Ovid *Heroides* 12.33–8: "Tunc ego te vidi, tunc coepi scire quid esses; / illa fuit mentis prima ruina meae. / et vidi et perii! nec notis ignibus arsi, / ardet ut ad magnos pinea taeda deos. / et formosus eras et me mea fata trahebant: / abstulerant oculi lumina nostra tui". The edition is by Häuptli 2011. If not indicated otherwise, the translations are my own in order to remain as close as possible to the source text to enhance comparability. My thanks go to Micaela Brembilla for helping me with Ovid and especially Guido's Latin.

various other characters out of love for Jason.[2] After his adultery, she turns
against him by murdering his new wife, her father and her and Jason's two
sons. Her revenge is accompanied by a passionate monologue in each of the
abovementioned writer's texts, except for Apollonius' whose story ends be-
fore Jason's return home.

3.1 TRANSLATING MEDEA FOR A CHRISTIAN EUROPE

When the matter of Medea is reintroduced between 1155–1160 by Benoît
de Sainte-Maure in the *Roman de Troie*, it is translated for a vastly different
medieval Christian society. Written for the court of Henry II and Eleanor
of Aquitaine, it provides not only a genealogy that links the house of An-
jou-Plantagenet to the heroes of Troy but inspires a genre of its own, the
roman antique. By fusing the matter of Medea with the matter of Troy, Ben-
oît creates an epic tale that reinterprets various ancient texts and fuses them
into a new narrative, suitable to a new audience of Christian nobles.[3]

To turn Medea into a narrative acceptable equally for a clerical and public
audience,[4] Benoît's text seems to reinterpret the passage quoted above as the
actual turning point of Medea's life, instead of the moment before the mur-
ders of Creusa and her children, which is the instance when Ovid's letter is
written. Benoît applies here what I would like to call a *Kunstgriff*: an artist's
advanced technique that produces a surprising result due to their skill and
knowledge. In the case of Benoît's text, the *Kunstgriff* consists of removing
Medea's monologue, in which she suffers from lovesickness because of her
unfaithful husband and plots her terrible revenge, from its traditional posi-
tion right before the murders. It is instead placed right before Medea's and
Jason's first night and focuses on lovesickness because of her still unfulfilled
love and the torture of having to wait for a lover who might or might not
come.

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[2] Morse 1996, 3–7, 26–34.

[3] Jones 1972, 44; Bedel 2013, 2–4; Goldwyn 2018, 155.

[4] Burgess & Kelly 2017, 6; Nolan 1992, 44–7. In his introduction, the accessibility and
usefulness of the *Roman de Troie* for clerics and laymen is emphasised. It states fur-
thermore that "Benoît de Sainte-Maure [...] invented, composed and related it, writ-
ing it down [...] and shaping, polishing, arranging and disposing it so that neither
more nor less of it is required" (Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1–144).

Furthermore, this *Kunstgriff* enables the narrator to only vaguely summarize the remaining plot that contains Jason's unfaithfulness and the murders, since the probably most intriguing part, the monologue, has been moved. This summary also provides narrative space for a moral judgement on Medea's and Jason's actions, which differs in each translation of Benoît's text, turning the narrator's comment into a translator's comment.

My first hypothesis is two things are accomplished by the *Kunstgriff* of relocating Medea's monologue from right before the murder to the moment when Medea ponders whether or not she should give into her love to Jason. The first is that Medea's lovesickness can be depicted in terms of courtly love, a tightrope-walk between erotic desire, spiritual attainment, and social norms.[5] These portrayals would have appeared more familiar to a medieval audience and created a climax by Medea's decision of either giving in or abstaining eternally. The second achievement is the chance to skim over Medea's 'bad ending' and only vaguely foreshadow the murders, since the climax and center point of the story, the monologue, has already taken place.[6] No other monologue could be as impactful as the one at the very instance Medea realizes 'what Jason could be', when her wisdom and foresight warn her of the terrible fate she is bound to fall for.

In what follows, I will not only analyse Benoît's monologue and compare it to its Ovidian source material but also to the same passages in four medieval translations into Byzantine Greek, Medieval Latin, and Middle High German.[7] The recognition of Benoît's *Kunstgriff* can then be proven by the attention each translation pays to the monologue despite their differences in social backgrounds, target cultures and languages. Although the German translations especially are sometimes far removed from their French source text, I will still consider them translations since Benoît's *Roman de Troie* is their starting point and remains at their core despite various additions and subtractions to its content.[8]

Furthermore, it is not uncommon in medieval translations to explicitly intervene with their source texts for various, but often moral, reasons. These

[5] Boase 1986, 667–8.
[6] Jones 1972, 44; De Santis 2016, 14.
[7] For other translations of Benoît's text: Goldwyn 2018, 155–88.
[8] Morse 1996, 90–3.

cases often can only be identified through a comparative reading, which makes them all the more interesting since they point out the different translation approaches. In the analysed passage, each translator's understanding of Medea's fate will appear in the guise of a narrator's comment despite expressing the translator's reading. The translator's voices in these passages are, like the narrator's voice, not to be considered historical voices correlating to a historical person. Instead, they should be understood as a special type of narrating voice that can overlap, disagree, and even change the original narrator's voice.

The Byzantine Greek Ὁ Πόλεμος τῆς Τρωάδος (*O Polemos tis Troados* – "War of Troy") has been identified by Elizabeth Jeffreys as a translation issued in Morea before 1281.[9] Morea was at that time a French crusader state in which French and Greek speaking populations coexisted. The translation can be seen as an attempt to influence the Greek speaking cultural elite favourably towards their French rulers, as Benoît's texts establishes a blood relation between ancient Greek heroes and the house of Anjou-Plantagenet. Whether or not this attempt was successful, it remains as a fact that the text had great influence on the Byzantine novel tradition. For the matter of Medea, it will be seen that the rather close translation accepts the repositioning of the monologue as well as the removal of the murders while commenting on Jason's infidelity as a sin rightfully punished by divine intervention.

The highly influential Medieval Latin *Historia destructionis Troiae* ("History of the destruction of Troy") is a prose translation by Guido delle Colonne completed in 1287.[10] Latin being the lingua franca of the West European Middle Ages, his translation was later translated into a number of European languages. Guido's translation possesses a noticeable Christian-moralistic tendency. Especially Medea is used to point out suitable behaviour for Christian noble women and to create an opposition between heathen knowledge and beliefs from antiquity and contemporary Christian perspectives. While the translation follows and even emphasizes the repositioning of the monologue, it goes into more detail about the events after Jason gains the fleece. Although it never mentions what happens between

[9] Jeffreys 2013, 224, 229–32; Agapitos 2012, 257.
[10] Melgar 2021, 84–85.

Jason and Medea besides unspecified crimes and murder, the translator's voice nevertheless judges both Medea and Jason harshly for their behaviour.

The oldest High Middle German translation composed 1190–1200 by Herbort von Fritzlar, the *Liet von Troye* ("Song of Troy"), was, according to its introduction, issued by count Hermann von Thüringen, who had previously sponsored Heinrich von Veldeke's translation of the French *Roman d'Énéas*, one of the *roman antique* that Benoît had inspired. Interestingly, Herbort's text omits not only the monologue but also erases any mention of possible bad endings in a translator/narrator's comment: Jason and Medea live happily ever after. This, however, still can support that Medea's monologue was understood as the catastrophe's starting point and therefore had to be removed as well, a decision that might be due to Herbort's strong Christianising tendencies as a cleric.

The second and more influential Middle High German translation was composed by Konrad von Würzburg in the thirteenth century as *Trojanerkrieg* ("War of the Trojans"), which, though it overtook Herbort's translation in popularity, remained unfinished. Not much is known about the circumstances of its creation, but it is likely to have been a commissioned work as well. It clearly demonstrates a scholarly translation approach: the translator-poet is also a redactor who adds their own knowledge to the text and improves the translation with additional sources – a process the text often reflects on.[11] It is therefore not surprising that Medea's monologue is prolonged, and the omitted bad ending is more explicit. The translator's moral evaluation of Jason's infidelity becomes consequently more nuanced but still employs the same strategy of omission by skipping Medea's fate after the murder of Jason and his new bride. Equally, the monologue remains in the same place and no other monologue is added before Medea's revenge, displaying the recognition of Benoît's *Kunstgriff* even by a translator well versed in the Latin sources.

Comparative analysis will prove the importance of Benoît's *Kunstgriff* for the medieval approach to the matter of Medea. A close reading will show how each culture places their own emphasis on relevant socio-political as-

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[11] Another example of the use of translation theory on medieval corpus texts can be found in chapter 4 of this volume.

pects even within the same language and how the translator's choices affect the narrative and the depiction of the characters.

Probably the most recognizable feature in the medieval translations of Medea's relationship with Jason is the fact that Medea plays the active part.[12] Unlike in the *Heroides*,[13] Benoît's Medea has already set her sights on Jason even before their meeting because of the stories about him.[14] This renders her love courtlier as it is not superficially based on erotic desire for Jason's good looks but inspired by spiritual longing for his qualities as a hero.[15]

After Medea is given a short description, it is her female gaze that focuses on Jason and awakens her longing like it does in the *Heroides*. In her desire to marry him, she convinces him of the necessity of her help and demands his hand in marriage in exchange. It should also be noted that, in Benoît, the vow she receives in return is the vow of a vassal to his lord.[16] Since this places them on unequal standing, their courtly love attains its third ingredient, as it is socially unacceptable for a person of higher standing to marry below their position.[17] Their inequality is emphasized when Jason is not only unable to attain the golden fleece without Medea but also cannot find the way to her chambers and needs to be fetched by Medea's servant. The text points out Jason's extreme passivity in the narrator's comment that they successfully spent the night together unless Jason experienced (even more) impotence,[18] leaving the success of their first night open to the reader's interpretation of Jason's questionable abilities.[19]

The introduction of the *Roman de Troie* also explains that the story will contain "clever additions" ("bon dits")[20] to the source material with the aim

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[12] Jones 1972, 44.

[13] Jones 1972, 43. Another important source is Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VII. For other sources used: De Santis 2016, 10–11; Morse 1996, 81–6.

[14] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1257–63.

[15] Lienert 1996, 217, 292.

[16] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1388–1400. Morse 1996, 86.

[17] Morse 1996, 87.

[18] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1585–90.

[19] Lienert 1996, 216.

[20] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 142.

to improve the text.[21] One of these could be the depiction of Jason as Medea's vassal that also fits the contemporary medieval perception of Antiquity having a similar society.[22] Medea's first word in their first conversation is "vassal" ("Vassaus") when addressing Jason.[23] Next, she emphasizes that her talking to him should not be seen as improper although they are not of equal standing.[24] Jason's reply shows his gratefulness for being addressed by her and stresses his lower standing that made it impossible for him to approach her.[25] Despite their assertions of doing something appropriate, this provides the first confirmation that Medea's intentions are utterly unacceptable. As heiress of Colchis, she is not supposed to have an interest in a vassal. Jason's "cleverly added" status turns into a marker for their bad ending: According to the rules of courtly love, a love that is socially condemned is doomed to fail.[26]

Since Jason appears to have very little power of his own, it seems less surprising that Medea is not only taking the lead but is also the one to suffer from the emotional consequences.[27] The emotional torture of her love is depicted through the slow passing of narrated time, similar in each translation except Herbort's: While the sun is not setting fast enough and nightfall is coming too slow,[28] Medea starts to fear the moonrise as soon as it turns dark, as this indicates the passing of the night.[29] She then laments having to wait for a lover who may or may not come. In this, the text uses the most notable motifs of Ovid's twelfth letter in the *Heroides*: A celebration for Jason is taking place, but without Medea being able to join.[30] She can only sit there,

[21] Bruckner 2015, 366, 368.

[22] Burgess & Kelly 2017, 5–6.

[23] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1313.

[24] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1313–20.

[25] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1321–32.

[26] Boase 1986, 667–8.

[27] De Santis 2016, 15–17.

[28] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1464–74.

[29] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1475–85.

[30] Ovid, *Heroides* 12.137–43.

deprived of her sleep,[31] knowing that he will not come,[32] leading to regretting her foolishness[33] and the crime of trusting an untrustworthy man.[34]

> "What is this?" she exclaimed. "When will these people turn in? Have they sworn to stay up and never go to bed? Whoever saw people be up so late and not grow weary of staying awake? Wretched people, utter fools! It is already past midnight. There is little time left before daybreak. I have indeed been foolish. What have I got myself into? I could be blamed more plausibly than a person caught in the act of stealing. One could deem me foolish and suspicious, standing here for no good reason. Do I need to fear that Jason will fail to come to me whenever I send for him? Of course, he will come, quite willingly, I believe. What am I waiting for? I have already gone so far that I now regret what I have done."[35]

Although Ovid also provides a monologue for Medea in the *Metamorphoses* that takes place before her and Jason's first night, its content does not seem related to Benoît's waiting Medea.[36] Instead, as shown above, several motifs (discussed below) seem to stem from Ovid's letter that is written from the perspective of an already betrayed Medea. By using these motifs, the intertextual references give the passage in the *Roman de Troie* a proleptic quality since she appears to predict her future lament about her unfaithful husband. Despite not having done anything yet, Medea is already regretting her decision. This turns her staying awake and waiting into a crime that would be

[31] Ovid, *Heroides* 12.169–71.

[32] Ovid, *Heroides* 12.173–4.

[33] Ovid, *Heroides* 12.3–6.

[34] Ovid, *Heroides* 12.19–20. For another comparison: De Santis 2016, 18–19.

[35] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1487–508: "Iço," fait ele, "que sera? / Ceste gent quant se couchera? / Ont il juré qu'il veilleront / Eque mais ne se coucheront? / Qui vit mais gent que tant veillast, / Que de veillier ne se lassast? / Mauvaise gent, fole provee, / Ja est la mie nuit passee, / Mout a mais poi desci qu'al jor. / Certes mout a en mei folor: / De quei me sui jo entremise? / Mieuz en devreie estre reprise / Que cil qui es trovez emblant. / Fol corage e mauvais semblant / Porreit l'om o trover en mei, / Que ci m'estois ne sai por quei. / Estuet me il estre en esfrei / Que volentiers ne vienge a mei / Jason, quel hore qu'i envei? / O il, mout volentiers, ço crei. / Que faz jo ci ne cui atent? / Tent en ai fait qu'or m'en repent." Translation by Burgess & Kelly 2017, 63.

[36] In this aspect, I agree with De Santis (2016), who thinks of the letter as the main source and not the monologue in the *Metamorphoses* like Lienert (1996) does.

more condemned by the implied social norms than stealing[37] – instead of the other, omitted crimes.[38] She convinces herself that Jason would most likely never ignore her calling as he had already promised himself to her. This, of course, can be seen as a foreshadowing of a time when he will have abandoned her. Her question of whether he will fail to come is going to be answered with "yes", although not now.

With this, her other question "What am I waiting for?"[39] bears similarity to Medea's decision making and self-encouragement before murdering Creusa, Creon and her children. It can also be argued that Benoît's monologue possesses proleptic qualities due to Medea's foresight. Through the demonstrated parallels to Ovid's *Heroides,* the heroine is represented as similarly torn. This is reinforced by rhetorical questions ("Do I need to fear that Jason will fail to come to me whenever I send for him?").[40] These questions will be asked again in the future, but in a vastly different context and resulting in a vastly different answer.

This future, however, is depicted only in a short summary at the end of her story, before the narration returns to the story of the Trojan War proper. Instead of a second monologue, an explicit comment is integrated to provide a central moral message. Medea is accused of "great folly" ("Grant folie")[41] for abandoning her parents and her people for her love of a vassal.[42] Western medieval customs and values find their way into the matter of Medea. Jason's powerlessness mentioned above is related to his status as Medea's vassal. As a person of lower standing, he has less ability to act and is supposed to obey the orders of his superior. Therefore, the correct order of things would be for him to follow Medea, but by her following him instead and abandoning her rightful position and duties as his lord, they are both bound for misery.

Since Jason and Medea fail to maintain their socially acceptable relationship of lord and vassal, Medea's example of unfaithfulness is copied by her vassal, who in turn abandons her. Since Medea already voiced her regrets in

[37] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1496–502.

[38] De Santis 2016, 23.

[39] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1507.

[40] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1503–5.

[41] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 2029.

[42] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 2030–32.

her monologue or maybe because the unfaithfulness of a vassal is deemed even more shameful[43] than her deeds, the narrator strongly emphasizes Jason's crimes and punishment.

> That was an act of great folly on Medea's part. She loved the vassal passionately and left her kin for him, as well as her father, her mother and her people. Afterwards, things turned out very badly for her because, as my author says, he later abandoned her, thus committing a very shameful act. She had saved him from death, so he ought not to have forsaken her after that. He shamefully deceived her, which distresses me because he was false to his word in a disgraceful way. All the gods were angry with him, and their vengeance on him was terrible. I shall say no more on this matter, nor do I wish to do so, for I have a very long tale to tell.[44]

For his breach of loyalty, Jason is punished by the gods and shamed by the narrator.[45] Interestingly, the narrator refuses to detail the punishment of his crimes and does not mention Medea's part in it. Instead, they refer to their source ("si com li Autors reconte"),[46] probably Ovid or Dares, and excuse themselves with their task of having to tell the whole matter of Troy.[47] I argue that skipping the most gruesome parts of Medea's story without losing

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[43] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 2036.

[44] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 2030–44 : "Grant folie fist Medea : / Trop ot le vassal aamè, / Por lui laissa son parentè, / Son père e sa mere e sa gent. / Assez l'en prist puis malement ; / Quar, si com li Autors reconte, / Puis la laissa, si fist grant honte. / El l'aveit guardé de morir : / Ja puis ne la deüst guerpir. / Trop l'engeigna, ço peise mei ; / Laidement li menti sa fei. / Trestuit li deu s'en corrocierent, / Qui mout asprement l'en vengierent. / N'en direi plus, ne nel vueil faire, / Quar mout ai grant uevre a retaire." Translation by Burgess & Kelly 2017, 69.

[45] Bruckner 2015, 377.

[46] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 2034.

[47] Morse 1996, 88. Ovid's recounting of the story is short and condemns Medea for the murders. There is no moral judgment on Jason's second marriage: "After the new bride burned in Colchian poison and both seas saw the blazing house of the king, and the sword was impiously bathed in the blood of the children, being avenged terribly, the mother fled Jason's weapons" ("sed postquam Colchis arsit nova nupta venenis / flagrantemque domum regis mare vidit utrumque, / sanguine natorum perfunditur inpius ensis, / ultaque se male mater Iasonis effugit arma": Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 7.394–7).

the intriguing dramatic moment of a tragic love tale is only possible by relocating Medea's monologue to the beginning of their love. This way, Medea's magic provides her also with a certain foresight about Jason's unfaithfulness and her estrangement in a Greek society, where she is but a barbarian.

The strong emphasis on Medea's failure in her duties as a king's heiress probably reflects the text's circumstances.[48] Written to provide a heroic ancestry for the royal family Anjou-Plantagenet, Medea's example serves as a warning for the tragic end of those abandoning their status for a mere vassal.[49] This, in my opinion, also explains why the matter of Medea was integrated into the matter of Troy: Her fate serves as a warning and negative example in comparison to the supposedly successful lineage of the royal house of Anjou-Plantagenet, the alleged heirs of Troy.

3.3 THE GREEK *WAR OF TROY*

By looking at the corresponding parts of the anonymous Greek *War of Troy*, it can now be shown whether Benoît's *Kunstgriff* has been recognized by this Greek translation, which alterations have been made, and to what outcome.[50] The Greek text shortens its source by half, from 30,000 French verses to around 14,400 in Greek.[51] It should, however, be mentioned that the political verse of the Greek version contains an average of 15 syllables – considerably more than the French octosyllable. Counted as a whole, then, the Greek text should not be much shorter than its French source. When comparing the monologues, the 10 Greek verses and the 21 French ones result in only a slight shortening. Still, the questions remain: what has changed about it, and how does it affect the overall depiction of the scene?

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[48] Bruckner 2015, 377.

[49] Bruckner 2015, 366; Jeffreys 2019, 167.

[50] For reconstructions of the text's age and possible author: Jeffreys 2013, 232–3. Since by the time of the Byzantine translation, Benoît's text existed in prose and verse, Jeffreys offers some insight on the possible sources: Jeffreys 2013, 230–2; Jeffreys 2019, 168. It would also be interesting to compare the existing manuscripts with Benoît's text to see how they differ in the analyzed passages.

[51] Jeffreys 2013, 229. Goldwyn 2018, 155.

What is so weird with these people? Did they swear not to fall asleep until day-break? Cursed humans, why are they staying awake for so long? Never in the world have I seen it that they stay awake that long. Now the middle of the night has passed, and they have not slept yet; see the great crime. Again, for me, that is very great injudiciousness; It happens indeed that I am in love because Jason will come at the time I want. What am I waiting for? What am I doing here at the door? I have done so much, I have been so idle, I changed my mind a lot.[52]

Again, Medea is lamenting that the others seem unwilling to sleep, and the night is passing, which is covering more than half of her lines.[53] The latter half of the monologue contains her reasoning why she should not worry, but also the nervousness that keeps her wandering around. Missing in comparison to the source material is Medea's explanation of why her actions can be judged foolish and her fear of being caught in the act and blamed. The outside perspective on her crimes is replaced by Medea reassuring herself and her reflections of her feelings. Furthermore, the unlawful act (ἀνομία – *anomia*)[54] is committed by the company of celebrating men who rob her of time together with Jason.

I argue that these alterations were made deliberately and for textual reasons that depend on a different reading of Medea's character. The text emphasizes Medea's feelings more and takes away her perception of committing a crime. She is concerned about neither laws nor morals, but only about the wrong she is suffering.[55] Her status as descendant of the gods or, in this case, as sole heir of the kingdom of Colchis elevates her above common judgement and even a long celebration can turn into a crime against her.

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[52] *War of Troy* 438–48: Τί ἔνι τὸ ξενοχάραγον εἰς τὸν λαὸν ἐτοῦτον; / Ὤμοσαν νὰ μὴ κοιμηθοῦν μέχρι καὶ τὴν ἡμέραν; / Καταραμένοι ἄνθρωποι, διατί τόσα ἀγρυπνοῦσι; / Ποτὲ εἰς τὸν κόσμο οὐκ εἶδα το, τόσα νὰ ἀγρυπνοῦσιν. / Ἀπεδὰ τὸ μεσονύκτιον ἐπέρασε τῆς νύκτας / καὶ αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἐκοιμήθησαν· ἔδε ἀνομία μεγάλη. / Πάλιν πολλὰ ἔνι εἰς ἐμὲν μεγάλη ἀφροσύνη· / καλὰ τυχαίνει τὸ ἀληθὲς καταπιασμένη νὰ εἶμαι / <ὅτι> οἵαν θελήσω ὁ Ἰασοῦς ὥρα <οὐ> καταλαμβάνει. / Τί ἔνι τὸ ἐκδέχομαι; τί κάμνω ἐδῶ εἰς τὴν πόρταν; / Τόσα ἔποισα, τόσα ἄργησα, πολλὰ μοῦ μεταγνώθει.
[53] *War of Troy* 438–44.
[54] *War of Troy* 443.
[55] *War of Troy* 443.

[64]

Another reason for the change in the Greek version might be that her crime would be to have spent a night with a man without being married to him. Omitting Medea's guilty feelings as portrayed in Benoît's version could maybe also be considered some sort of censorship of a scene that might have been considered morally dubious due to its sexual content. What strengthens this theory is that the description of the night spent together is shortened to a mere two verses: "What more can I tell you? This whole night they were lying completely naked, loving each other very sweetly".[56] There is no mention of virginity or impotence, maybe because the information was seen as too explicit by the translator or as an unfitting depiction of Jason. This is especially remarkable since I showed above that the Greek text hardly changes the French source but does shorten the sex scene of an unmarried couple, probably with the aim to make the scene less problematic.

To sum up, the modifications in the Byzantine version might be due to a variation in the proleptic focus, concentrating on lamentations about the crimes Medea is suffering and by preferring less ambiguous main characters.

Like its French source, the Byzantine version uses the *Kunstgriff* of relocating Medea's monologue and ending the narrative before the murders to conclude the story before the details become too extreme, although a Greek audience might have been more familiar with the complete matter of Medea.

In comparison to the fifteen French verses, the eight Greek verses provide a slightly larger amount of text.

> The pleasant one did badly in trusting him; she left her father and went away with that man. He did not show good faith nor kept the oath with her, but after a short while, he denied her completely. The brutish act he did distressed me. She, as you heard, had saved his life, and he denied her – behold the great sin. All the gods were angry with him and quickly avenged her. How it happened and what I need not tell.[57]

[56] *War of Troy* 523–4: Τί νὰ σᾶς λέγω τὰ πολλά; Ὅλην αὐτὴν τὴν νύκταν/ὁλόγυμνοι ἐκοιμούντησαν, γλυκύτατα φιλοῦνται.

[57] *War of Troy* 716–24: κακὸν ἐποῖκε ἡ ἔμνοστη ὅταν ἐνεμπιστεύθη· / ἀφῆκε τὸν πατέρα της, ἐδιέβη μετ' ἐκεῖνον. / Πιστότηταν οὐκ ἔδειξεν οὐδὲ ὅρκους εἰς ἐκείνην, / ἀλλὰ μετ' ὀλίγον καιρὸν ἀρνήθηκέ την ὅλως. / Χωριάτικον τὸ ἔποικεν, ἐβάρυνεν ἐμένα. / Ἐκείνη, ὡς

Although the amount of text is similar, the Greek version lacks the French notion of a source text and instead emphasizes the narrator's feelings of distress (ἐβάρυνεν ἐμένα – *evarinen emena*). In this passage, the comparison to Benoît's text shows a change in the narrator's voice that contains the opinion of the translator as a different voice:[58] As they were not writing a story by combining different sources, but mainly translating a French text into Greek, mentioning an unnamed source they neither had nor knew might have appeared false to the Greek translator.[59] Instead, they present an interesting mixture of a reader and narrator's comment by showing the emotion that the narrator, as well as the translator as a reader, can experience upon reading Medea's story. Whereas narrator and translator often share the same voice, instances like this make it possible to perceive the translator as a separate voice when read in comparison to the source text.[60] This appearance of the translator's voice happens particularly often when the text decides on behalf of the reader whether a passage is suitable, understandable or has to be changed in some way.[61] Accordingly, the voice of the translator is the one that mediates the unfamiliar foreign norms with the norms of the target culture, therefore adjusting and interfering with the authors' voice.[62]

The use of the narrator/translator's voice displayed in the Greek translation is similar to the German translations, where the existence of an interpreting translator is often emphasized through similar comments.[63] A closer analysis of these comments in the Greek version might cast a new light on the self-perception of the translator(s) and their poetics.

ἀκούσατε, τοῦ ἔσωσε τὴν ζωήν του, / καὶ ἐκεῖνος τὴν ἀρνήθηκεν—ἔδε ἁμαρτία μεγάλη. / Ὅλοι οἱ θεοὶ τοῦ ὠργίσθησαν, γοργὸν τὴν ἐκδικῆσαν. / Τὸ πῶς δὲ καὶ τί γέγονεν, οὐκ ἔχω χρείαν λέγειν.

[58] According to Goldwyn (2018, 173), this is the only instance where the Greek narrator/translator comments on the story.

[59] Jeffreys 2019, 181–2.

[60] "In translated texts, therefore, a discursive presence is to be found, the presence of the (implied) translator. It can manifest itself in a voice which is not that of the narrator of the source text. We could say that two voices are present in the narrative discourse of the translated text: the voice of the narrator of the source text and the voice of the translator" (O'Sullivan 2003, 202).

[61] O'Sullivan 2003, 198.

[62] Coillie & McMartin 2020, 20.

[63] Herberich 2010, 142; Lienert 1996, 25.

Another missing part compared to Benoît's text is feudal duty. A vassal's behaviour is something specific to Western kingdoms and foreign to a Byzantine readership. Although the concept should be known in Frankish Morea, where the translation was created, it becomes mainly a part of Jason's oath.[64] Therefore, it could be a figure of speech since the narrator does not refer to him as a vassal.[65] Instead, Jason's unfaithfulness is turned into an act of sin (ἁμαρτία - *armatia*) that is pointed out by the word "See!" (ἔδε - *ede*). By adjusting Jason's behaviour to the norms of a Christian society, vassalage is translated into an understandable concept.[66]

The fact that Jason is punished, however, remains the same. Both a breach of fealty and committing a sin is punished by the gods. The Greek emphasizes that the god's punishment avenges Medea, which casts a particular light on the moral perception of an unfaithful husband. Medea appears less motivated by passion and love but follows Jason in good faith.

When the narrator finally refuses to give the details about Medea's fate, they merely state that there is no need to do so, instead of giving an excuse as happened in the French text. This might either be due to the expected familiarity with the matter of Medea or maybe because the explanation seemed unnecessary.

Summarizing the comparison, it gives the impression of a faithfully translated text that takes liberties in making minor adjustments for its target culture. The *Kunstgriff* of relocating Medea's monologue is readily accepted to avoid morally dubious content that is probably already known to the reader.

3.4 THE MEDIEVAL LATIN *HISTORY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF TROY*

Guido delle Colonne's *History of the Destruction of Troy*, composed in 1287, is remarkable in the sense that it offers a prose rather than a verse translation. The text is a novelistic commentary with strong moral tendencies and many instances in which the translator's voice is present. The translator's voice uses the *Roman de Troie* as a screen to project and reflect on contemporary ideas

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[64] Jeffreys 2019, 171–6.

[65] Jeffreys 2019, 177–9.

[66] The more moralizing tendencies can also be found in other translations: Goldwyn 2018, 174, 176.

and concepts about matters such as adequate behaviour, female wiles, faith, morality, feudal society, and science.[67]

Interestingly, the *History of the Destruction of Troy* blames Medea's father for everything. For placing a beautiful virgin right next to a handsome young man and encouraging her to talk to him, the translator accuses him of being a mindless and honourless noble and holds him responsible for the subsequent events.[68] Overall, the translator's perspective on Medea is consciously misogynistic, portraying her as a new Eve.[69] Being a woman, she is secretive and lust-driven in her actions because "we know that the soul of a woman always strives for a man, like matter always strives for form"[70] and "since it is always the custom of all women that when they desire some man with a dishonest desire, to seek their excuses under the veil of some honesty".[71] Her knowledge about magic, necromancy, and science is refuted based on Christian faith after which the translator explains that Medea is probably only a legendary person and not real.[72] As the most powerful female character,[73] Medea is the only character whose fictitiousness the text emphasizes, showing the translator's discomfort with a powerful, knowledgeable female character who steers the male characters' fate.[74]

Yet, even with an apparent distaste for the character, the *History of the Destruction of Troy* still recognises and applies the *Kunstgriff* of moving Medea's monologue to the night when she has to wait for Jason. The monologue, however, is turned into a description of Medea's impatience while waiting for everyone to fall asleep, without directly voicing her feelings:

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[67] Similar observations have been made: Simpson 1998, 420–422.

[68] Guido, *History* 18. On female stereotypical beauty in Guido's translation: Bedel 2013, 6–19.

[69] Bedel 2013, 5, 29.

[70] Guido, *History* 18: "Scimus enim mulieris animum semper virum appetere, sicut appetit materia semper formam."

[71] Guido, *History* 19: "Omnium enim mulierum semper est moris vt cum inhonesto desiderio virum aliquem appetunt, sub alicuius honestatis uelamine suas excusationes intendant."

[72] Guido, *History* 16–17. About the discomfort with Medea's powers: Bedel 2013, 40.

[73] Bedel 2013, 26.

[74] Goldwyn discusses similar dynamics in chapter 5 of this volume.

O, how for a longing heart nothing hastens enough! For with how many anxious torments Medea is then tortured when she feels that her father's servants in the palace keep the long waking hours to avoid the night, and the musical noises of the ones awake do not in any way encourage sleep! Therefore, as if waiting impatiently for a long time, she is now restlessly carried hither and thither through the chamber; now she turns herself to her guests to investigate if by chance the ones awake enter into the realm of sleep, now she opens the shutters of the windows to inspect through them how much time of that night has passed. But for so long she is tormented by such straits and made sick from every side, until the crowing of the rooster, the prayer of sleep, warns the ones awake and they long for the immediate rest of sleep.[75]

Although the passage is narrated differently, it is easy to detect the similarities to the same scene in the *Roman de Troie*. The celebrations and the people refusing to sleep make Medea upset like in the source text. Although no words are spoken by Medea, the first exclamation ("Oh, how for a longing heart nothing hastens enough!") in the passage and her subsequent restlessness convey her inner turmoil through her outward behaviour. Furthermore, this change of focalisation that leaves Medea's inner world hidden and open to imagination emphasizes the role of the translator/narrator for the story. Although the narrated matter is highly questionable for a Christian reader, it can be told under the guidance of such a translator/narrator who will constantly put the story into perspective for the contemporary medieval Christian.

Similarly, the sex scene first emphasizes on Medea's unquenchable desire, portraying her once again as an example of condemnable female lust. Having shown maybe too many scandalous details, the translator escapes into

[75] Guido, *History* 23: "Set O quam desideranti animo nichil satis festinatur! Quantis enim torquetur cruciatibus anxiis tunc Medea cum sentit patris famulos in palatio longa uigilia noctem eludere et inuigilantibus signa cadentia sompnos nullatenus suadere! Longe igitur expectationis uelut impatiens nunc huc nunc illuc fertur per cameram inquieta; nunc ad eius se dirigit [h]ostium exploratura si forte uigilantes ineant de dormitione tractatum, nunc conuersas ualuas aperit fenestrarum inspectura per illas quantus effluxerit de nocte ea decursus. Sed tamdiu talibus uexatur angustiis donec gallorum cantus, dormitionis preco, undique inualescit, ad quorum monitus vigilantes instantem quietem appetunt dormiendi."

scholarly comment about the temptation and dangers of intercourse.[76] In this sense, the translator/narrator becomes much more visible as they continue to engage with the text and its characters in a one-sided conversation. Although their comments do not interfere with the narrated plot in the sense that the main events and their order remain and the characters do not react to them, they still influence the perspective on the story.

While Guido's translation recognizes and applies the *Kunstgriff*, the ending still contains more detailed information than the *Roman de Troie*. Unlike the French source text, the narrator does not argue that they have to leave Medea's tale behind for the sake of the main story. Instead, the narrator explains that Medea will be told a short summary about her fate before venturing once more into a one-sided, moralistic criticism with the character:[77]

> But, o Medea, you will be told that much that, wishing for a wind from the fortunate winds, you will abandon your country and flee from your father's scepter, you will cross the sea fearlessly, to love him without showing your crimes. Surely you will be told that you will arrive in Thessalia, where you will read that in Thessalia, after being found by Thessalian citizens, Jason will end his life after many detestable crimes through secret murder. But although Jason had been exposed to martyrdom by the vengeance of the gods for a long time before he himself died and his end, as if he had been condemned by the gods, had been concluded by a blameworthy death, tell me, what did you profit from the enormous expenses Jason incurred, tell me, what did you profit from the great revenge and vengeance of the gods afterwards followed for Jason? Of course, it is commonly said that when an animal is dead, it is useless to apply medicinal herbs to the nostrils. Unless perhaps it pleases the gods to not order reparation for injustice, but that mortals may know that the gods do not allow grievous offenses even in the face of the living to pass almost without retribution.[78]

[76] Guido, *History* 25.

[77] Bedel 2013, 30.

[78] Guido, *History* 32: "Set, O Medea, uentorum secundorum auram multum diceris peroptasse ut tuam desereres patriam et paterna septra diffugeres, mare transires intrepida, amare luis tua discrimina non aduertens. Sane diceris peruenisse in Thesaliam, ubi per Thesalum Iasonem, ciuibus inueneranda Thesalicis, occulta nece post multa detestanda discrimina uitam legeris finiuisse. Sed quamuis ultione deorum

In this part of the text, some difficulties appear due to the ambiguous nature of the Latin translation. The main question lies in how to translate "Iasonem" in the following sentence, which is the second sentence in the passage quoted above. This subsequently yields to two very different results. Since I consider the room for ambiguity an important part of the passage, I will discuss both options and their effect on the translation.[79]

> Sane diceris peruenisse in Thesaliam, ubi per Thesalum Iasonem, ciuibus inueneranda Thesalicis, occulta nece post multa detestanda discrimina uitam legeris finiuisse.

> Surely you will be told that you will arrive in Thessalia, where you will read that in Thessalia, after being found by Thessalian citizens, Jason will end your life after many detestable crimes through secret murder.

> Surely you will be told that you will arrive in Thessalia, where you will read that in Thessalia, after being found by Thessalian citizens, Jason will end his life after many detestable crimes through secret murder.

If "Iasonem" is considered to be a genuine accusative depending on the preposition "per" (by), the sentence results in Medea being murdered by Jason (per Iasonem). As in the quoted passage, he would then be reproached for his murder by the heathen gods and suffer horribly before his death. However, this is of no consequence to the dead Medea who cannot enjoy her vengeance. Therefore, there is no meaning in the heathen gods' revenge except if they want to prove that they already punish humans during their lifetimes. Interpreting the analogy of the dead animal that has no use for medicine, Medea would then be the animal and Jason's punishment the useless med-

Iason martirio multo fuisset expositus antequam et ipse decederet et eius decessus, tamquam dampnatus a diis, fuisset dampnabili morte conclusus, dic, tibi quid profuit Iasonem enormia incurrisse dispendia, dic, tibi quid profuit in Iasonem grauis ultio et uindicta deorum postea subsequuta? Sane uulgariter dici solet, animali mortuo inutiliter proficit medicinalium herbarum naribus adhibere medelas. Nisi forte diis placeat non imperasse recompensationem iniurie sed ut a mortalibus cognoscatur deos nolle graues culpas etiam in facie uiuentium absque pene talione transire."

[79] The ambiguity of this passage might be solved by creating a new critical edition of Guido's text that refers to a wider range of manuscripts: Melgar 2021, 85–87.

icine. Although killing Medea is a vastly different outcome from what one would expect, it is nevertheless plausible, considering the translator's obvious dislike for the character and the continuous misogynistic remarks.

However, if "Iasonem" is considered to be a part of an *accusativus cum infintivo* construction consisting of "legeris Iasonem vitam finuisse" ("you will read that Jason will end his life"), the outcome is more familiar. Yet, the murderer in this case is unnamed and his death is attributed to the heathen gods who punish him for his sins. In this case, Medea is still unable to benefit from Jason's death since a dead criminal is unable to repent or offer compensation for their victim. The analogy would then mean that Jason is the dead animal since he cannot learn from his punishment because he died. This turns the gods' interference useless for both him and Medea. Since Medea surviving is what would usually be expected from the story, understanding the Latin like that would be plausible as well. Considering that the *Roman de Troie* avoids further comments on her fate, the translator would have needed to refer to extratextual knowledge or their own imagination.

Looking at both possible readings, it is impossible to decide on a correct reading. Furthermore, the unhappy ending of Medea and Jason does not have an impact on the subsequent plot, which makes it difficult to pick a version based on the text alone. Although it would be possible to look at numerous translations of Guido's Latin version, it would only show how the text was understood and not help to clarify the ambiguity of the passage.[80] However, this reflects, in my opinion, the creative potential of Medea's story in combination with the *Kunstgriff*. By not telling what happens but foreshadowing Jason's unfaithfulness in the monologue, it is up to the audience to imagine their story, promptly encouraging some translators to spin their own versions, as Guido and the two subsequent German translators do.

3.5 THE MIDDLE HIGH GERMAN *SONG OF TROY* AND *WAR OF THE TROJANS*

The first translation to be mentioned in the German tradition should be Herbort von Fritzlar's *Liet von Troye*. This oldest German text about the matter of Troy, written between 1190 and 1200, shortens the *Roman de Troie*

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[80] For the unaccounted translations in Catalan and the difficulties of recreating Guido's original translation: Melgar 2021, 88–90, 105–106.

to around 18,500 verses.[81] Interestingly, it completely omits the monologue as well as any foreshadowing of Medea's tragic fate. Instead, Jason and Medea successfully consummate their marriage secretly.[82] When Medea is abducted, the kingdom is furious but helpless, and the narrator concludes with the notion that nothing is known about their later fate.[83]

This is probably not only due to the ideal of *brevitas* pursued in this translation.[84] Medea and Jason's sexual intercourse is substituted with a passage that explains that the contents of the night are unsuitable to be told to those who cannot logically conclude what is happening.[85] Although not written in the text, I suppose the same reasoning for the deletion of the monologue and later infidelity, as they were considered even more unsuitable for Christian readers. The moral ambiguity of Jason and Medea's love story is therefore reduced by dwelling less on their indecent behaviour and omitting the later infidelity. These, arguably, morally inspired changes could suggest that Herbot von Fritzlar recognised the connection of monologue and infidelity as well, which resulted in their removal. Much like Guido, Herbort's translation also is the result of moral and religious discomfort with the matter.

Werner Schröder has proposed an additional explanation for the lack of tragedy in this narration. Although developed for the *Trojanerkrieg*, I consider it more fitting for the *Liet von Troye*. According to Schröder, Christian writers avoid depicting tragedies because they question God and the possibility of salvation.[86] Schröder's argument seems very befitting of the *Liet von Troye* that actively avoids the tragic passages, at least for the matter of Medea. Here it would emphasize the Christian moralizing tendencies of the text that also considers dogmatic deliberations of the translator. This would add further proof to the assumption that the changes in the translation were due to moral considerations.

This theory, however, does not work with the next Medea passage of my analysis, the *Trojanerkrieg*, despite being the text Schröder developed

[81] Herberich 2010, 15, 19

[82] Herbort, *Liet von Troye* 945–74.

[83] Herbort, *Liet von Troye* 1143–79.

[84] Herberich 2010, 143–53.

[85] Herbort, *Liet von Troye* 975–82.

[86] Schröder 1992, 11.

his argument for. Against this, I find three arguments. First, that there exist more than enough tragic fates in the *Trojanerkrieg* and other Medieval epics and romances;[87] second, that the *Trojanerkrieg* indulges in the tragic fate of Medea by telling the details of Jason's infidelity, unlike Benoît; and third, that more recent studies have shown that although the church fathers condemned tragedy, the concept was heavily used by Medieval writers to describe and explain their time and situation.[88]

The translation strategies in Konrad's von Würzburg *Trojanerkrieg* can be seen as basically opposed to the Byzantine objective of a relatively close, slightly culturally adapted narrative. It also shows a completely different aim in comparison to Herbort von Fritzlar's morally less dubious story. This is evident in the monologue that is divided into two parts and prolonged to 199 verses in total, 29 verses for the first and 170 for the second part. While being significantly expanded, the main points of Medea's lamentations still remain, again set within the boundaries of courtly love.[89]

The first part also focuses mainly on her anger about the noisy celebrations, as she questions her father's decision not to bid everyone to go to bed.[90] However, she also starts talking about her suffering from love and anxious waiting in contrast to the festivities.[91] Her situation is then summed up by the narrator before Medea continues her lament.[92] The second part of the monologue begins with her unsuccessful struggle to free herself from her love for Jason,[93] followed by a reflection of its consequences for everyone.[94] She then realizes her powerlessness in the face of love, and, torn between honor and longing, she is forced to choose poorly against her better understanding.[95] As she is afraid that Jason might forsake her later, she plans

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[87] Lienert 1996, 310–14; Hasebrink 2002, 209–10.

[88] Symes 2010, 365–7.

[89] Hasebrink 2002, 211, 216–17, 219–21.

[90] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8567–84.

[91] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8585–94.

[92] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8586–617.

[93] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8618–29.

[94] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8630–49. Medea's love is depicted equally courtly and derived from splendid rumours about Jason (Schnell 1985, 282).

[95] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8650–727.

to bind him with vows.[96] First, she believes in Jason's trustworthiness but is soon swayed again and deliberates about staying with her father,[97] at which point the monologue ends while the narrator explains that she continues the same train of thoughts for a long time.[98]

It is evident that this translation also follows the structure developed in Benoît's text: Complaints, awareness of the dangerous implications of her love, the fear of being forsaken by Jason and self-encouragement mixed with self-doubt. In this respect, the first part of Medea's monologue resembles Benoît's text in structure and content. However, it is significantly extended with new details in the second part of the monologue.[99] Accordingly, the parts containing new material will be of special interest, namely the ones concerning the power of love and the proleptic fear.[100]

Love is introduced as an all-powerful fire that cannot be extinguished by cold reason. Although Medea already perceives the likely danger of being forsaken in the future by a man she hardly knows ("a guest I have hardly ever seen"),[101] she is unable to go against what love dictates to her:[102]

> But what am I, a great fool, talking
> That I consider extinguishing
> The sparks of hot love
> And the embers of her strong fire!
> If I could do it, it would be fortunate;
> Sadly it won't be happening.

[96] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8728–59.

[97] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8760–93.

[98] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8794–867. Krämer 2019, 85–6.

[99] This is not an unusual feature of Middle High German translations of French source material as also the Arthurian romances share the same fate. For example, Chrétien de Troye's *Erec et Enide* and *Yvain,* the first two adapted Arthurian romances, are extended by about 20% compared to their source material. Sieburg 2010, 126.

[100] For a more detailed analysis of Medeas monologue and its use of Ovid: Lienert 1996, 59–65.

[101] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8642: "Ein gast, den ich selten ie gesach".

[102] Hasebrink (2002, 222) argues that Medea's fear of being forsaken is unmotivated by the plot. However, considering that Medea is a sorceress with great wisdom, I would instead perceive the foreshadowing of Jason's betrayal as a traditional motif that emphasizes her desire for him.

I have seen the fair game

And the unfair one at the same time

What is fortunate for me or what will harm me

This I have learned both

But it still will not save me

From harmful suffering

The good is loathsome to me

And I very much prefer the bad."[103]

Although this passage is but a small part of a long lament, it illustrates the perception of love rendering Medea, despite all her knowledge, unable to escape her fate. She knows that she will choose poorly and is already suffering for it. Later on, the accuracy of her prediction and her inability to escape love becomes even more apparent when she fears being abandoned for another woman ("therefore I am very much afraid that he might cast me aside and marry another wife").[104]

These explicit depictions of the force tormenting Medea and her truthful foresight demonstrate that the monologue is perceived as a proleptic lament about her fate. The more shocking details can later on be omitted, as Medea already pities herself in this very moment. Even the Middle High German translation, which includes the murder of Peleus, Creusa, Creon and Jason, has no other monologue than this one. There is, however, a short speech in which Medea declares that she will murder both Jason and Creusa.[105] The declaration contains not a lament but a warning and an announcement of justified revenge.[106] In my opinion, this demonstrates the *Kunstgriff* of relo-

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[103] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8660–73: "wie rede ab ich vil tumbiu sô, / daz ich erleschen waene / der heizen minne spaene / und ir starkes fiures gluot? / möht ichz getuon, ez waere guot; / nû mac sîn leider niht geschehen. / ich hân daz waeger spil ersehen / und daz unwaeger ouch dâ bî. / waz mir guot, oder schade sî, / daz hân ich beidez wol erfarn / und mac mich doch niht hie bewarn / vor schedelicher swaere. / daz guote ist mir unmaere / und daz arge lieber vil."

[104] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8744–6: "Wan daz ich vürhte vaste, / daz er dâ kebse mînen lîp / und er dâ neme ein ander wîp." For similar observations: Krämer 2019, 82; Schröder 1992, 14–18.

[105] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 11270–89.

[106] Lienert 1996, 75–6, 217, 293.

cating Medea's lament is found in the *Trojanerkrieg* as well since Medea does not grief Jason's infidelity when she is actually experiencing it.

The possible reasons for the Middle High German strategy of including more details can be found within the text. A likely reason could be to stress the love-fire allegory already found in Ovid. Love as an all-consuming fire does not only burn Medea but Jason as well: Breaking the vows of their love deserves a fitting punishment – for Jason, the destruction by fire that would have killed him already without Medea's help. [107]

In addition, it could be argued that a particular writer's pride is to be found in the prologue. Here, Konrad von Würzburg declares wanting to compose a tale ("maere") that is the lord of every other epic ("I want to compose a story that is the lord of all the other stories").[108] As Elisabeth Lienert explains, this includes not only a superior story but also a story that contains various other stories – like the matter of Medea.[109] Accordingly, the introduction mentions not only Benoît as a source but also Dares and other Latin sources, possibly Ovid, which probably cumulates into the desire to prove additional knowledge at appropriate parts.[110] This emphasizes that the Middle High German translation has also recognized the *Kunstgriff* of relocating Medea's monologue.

Considering the end of the German translation, a large amount of content has been added in more than 1100 verses. In the beginning, the translator-narrator tells us that they will tell us Medea's fate and Jason's infidelity.

> This was a bad story
> How the very virtuous one
> Was abandoned by him.
> How the hero became
> Unfaithful to her;

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[107] Lienert 1996, 217, 293.

[108] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 234–5: "Ich wil ein maere tihten, / daz allen maeren ist ein her."

[109] Lienert 1996, 20–1, 193–201; Schröder 1992, 7.

[110] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 266–307. Lienert 1996, 22–8.

> This you will be told by me
>
> Before this speech comes to an end.[111]

Again, the translation presents an instance where the translator's voice becomes visible. The "me" ("mir") is the translator's voice who wishes to add new content that their source is missing. In a way, this demonstrates the overall agenda of creating the lord of all other stories by not sticking to the *Roman de Troie* as the only source. Where the Greek translation even removes the mentioning of other sources, the Middle High German translation emphasizes the addition of new material through the translator's voice.

The interesting questions are at this point, what is added and what happened to the *Kunstgriff*. Concerning the content, the text tells of their wedding supported by Medea's father. By turning Medea's and Jason's secret love affair into an official wedding, Medea is not blamed for abandoning her kin but turned into a victim. The text also recounts Medea's magic and her help with killing Jason's enemies before it continues with Jason's unfaithfulness, resulting in Medea killing Creusa, her father, and Jason. Children are not mentioned and do not seem to exist.

The perspective on Jason's infidelity is again different compared to the other versions in German, Greek and French. Instead of Christian values or fealty, it turns now into a matter of love. Although the same system existed in the Holy Roman Empire, Jason is not depicted as a vassal yet still remains passive and dependent on Medea.[112] Having an official wedding with his beloved, they are presented as of equal standing. According to the standards of courtly love, a marriage between a queen and a hero who has proven himself worthy through ordeals is by no means condemnable. This change furthermore suggests that the German translation was not interested in providing a noble lineage for an existing noble house but focused on the trials of courtly love.

Love, however, turns into a force similar to fate and cannot be overcome. Already Medea's monologue emphasized the foolishness of fighting against

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[111] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 10209–13: "daz was ein übel maere, / wan diu vil tugentbaere / wart sît von im verlâzen. / der helt begunde mâzen / triuwen sich engegen ir; / daz wirt iu noch geseit von mir, / ê disiu rede ein ende neme."

[112] Lienert 1996, 216; Krämer 2019, 84–5, 90, 95–6.

love ("minne"). Like Medea, Jason is but love's plaything.[113] His heart is created fickle and makes him abandon his lawful wife and forget all the things he received from her:

> Jason's heart was made that way
> That through it[114] he became unfaithful
> And forgot his lawful wife.
> [...]
> To his benefit, many things
> He had received from her:
> This was overlooked by the youth
> And unfaithful man,
> Thus he gained much harm
> And was led to sorrow.
> This was created by love's disloyalty,
> Who teaches how to falter
> And who turns herself
> Into never ending pain.
> For many hearts she becomes
> A treacherous guiding star.[115]

As this passage shows, Jason's behavior is not only judged but also explained. Creusa, or love in the shape of Creusa, has an effect on Jason's heart that

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[113] Krämer 2019, 94.

[114] "Si" ("it") interestingly refers to Creusa's friendship ("vriuntschaft"), a word that signifies the multitude of possible close relationships, including lovers, family and partner: Gebert 2013, 324–8. Again, this places Jason in a passive role where he is forced by Creusa as he was by Medea. However, since Creusa is just as worthy as Medea (Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 11207), the hero torn between two equal women must find a violent end like Siegfried in the *Niebelungenlied*.

[115] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 11210–12, 11222–33: "Jâsônes herze alsô behaft, / daz er dur si wart triuwelôs / und er sîn êlich wîp verkôs. / [...] / im was von ir ze guote / geschehen maniger hande dinc: / daz übersach der jungelinc / und der ungetriuwe man, / dâ von er schaden vil gewan / und in kumber wart geleit. / daz schuof der minne unstaetekeit, / die gnuoge wenken lêret / und si dar under kêret / in endelôsen smerzen, / si wirt vil manigem herzen / Ein falscher leitesterne."

controls his actions.[116] His unwillingness or inability to stay faithful despite his feelings result in his death. Insofar, Jason is not actively guilty for his un-faithfulness but rather has no more choice than Medea had when falling in love with him. Therefore, the translator-narrator is able to lament his death, as his conduct otherwise has been flawless and that of a worthy hero.[117]

Since Benoît uses the *Kunstgriff* to avoid the depiction of infidelity and murders, their explicit description by Konrad could lead to the conclusion that his Middle High German translation refuses the *Kunstgriff*. It would be possible to insert another revenge monologue, like in the ancient sources, and finish the matter of Medea without the narrator's voiced decision to return to the matter of Troy. However, looking at the final verses of the matter of Medea, they end in a similar manner as the Greek and French versions.

> I am at fault for having and wanting to
>
> not take up the task of telling
>
> how the noble born warrior
>
> was mourned at that time.
>
> and what happened to Medea
>
> I will also stay silent about.
>
> I will not pick up the lament of the hero
>
> that was made for him then;
>
> since I have enough other things
>
> to tell and to say,
>
> it does not suit me to lament
>
> Jason's cruel death.[118]

This translation also omits parts of the story, but the accents are slightly different. They refuse to tell about Medea's fate and to lament Jason's death.

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[116] Hasebrink 2002, 228.

[117] For similar arguments: Schröder 1992, 8–9; Lienert 1996, 76.

[118] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 11350–61: "von schulden muoz ich unde will / hie lân belîben under wegen, / wie der vil hôchgeborne degen / beweinet würde bî der zît. / und war Mêdêâ kaeme sît, / daz wirt ouch von mir hie verswigen. / des heldes clage lâz ich li-gen, / die man dur in des mâles truoc; / wan ich hân anders wol sô gnuoc / ze künden und ze sagene, / daz mir niht touc ze clagene / Jâsônes grimmeclicher tôt."

The depiction of Medea as a murderess, on the other hand, seems acceptable, maybe also because of the story's ancient setting. While fratricide and infanticide are not relevant in this version in which Medea has neither brother nor children, her revenge on Jason appears justified by his behaviour. Stories in which a lover is punished cruelly for their mistakes are not uncommon in German chivalric romances: Enite in *Erec*, Jeschute in *Parzival* and Iwein in *Iwein* are punished by their husband or wife for actual or assumed misdemeanour in marriage by being threatened with death, exiled, shunned, and beaten.

Yet, since Jason otherwise displayed heroic conduct, it is still possible to mourn the hero while condemning the deed. On this note, the narrator-translator accepts the blame that was in earlier versions placed on Medea and Jason: "I am at fault for having and wanting to/not take up the task of telling".[119] This again shows another understanding of guilt as neither Medea nor Jason can be blamed as 'persons', probably since they have been toyed with by love: Jason's fate is equally just and cruel.[120] Accordingly, the motif of blame can only shift to the translator who finishes the story without a lament for the hero or a conclusion for Medea.

The Middle High German version shows that its translator understood the *Kunstgriff* and kept it despite adding more content to the story: The monologue remains in the same position as in the French version, although the translator was most likely aware of its original position in the storyline of Ovid's letter. However, the monologue's new place at the beginning of Medea's and Jason's love story stresses the pain of unrequited love. If it had remained in the same position as the Latin sources, it would have described a formerly mutual love turning into hatred. My analysis suggests that Konrad von Würzburg not only preferred the focus on unfulfilled love that Benoît's *Kunstgriff* created but even elaborated on it with additional material. The strength of this love is emphasized by Medea being unable to resist it despite her strong powers and knowledge, as well as by the use of Ovidian motifs found in the *Heroides*.[121]

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[119] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 11350–1: "Von schulden muoz ich unde will/hie lân belîben under wegen."

[120] Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 11225–7, 11361.

[121] Lienert 1996, 59–65, 298–300.

The observations made in these texts show that Medea is deemed unable to escape suffering without heavy changes to the story like in the *Liet von Troye*. They also share the tendency to omit parts less suitable for a Christian audience. Nevertheless, even within the same culture, translators make vastly different choices when deciding what and how to translate their sources, sometimes even reflecting on their reading of the text in explicit comments.

The French and Byzantine texts both leave only slight hints at Medea's further story, which contains the gruesome murders. The Greek translator shifts the blame from Medea to Jason in their comment. Instead of calling Medea foolish, like the French narrator, the Greek translator emphasizes their distress over Jason's infidelity. The Middle High German and Latin translations appear as polar opposites to French and Greek. With a strong moralistic stance and misogynist ideology,[122] the Latin translation harshly criticizes every act of Medea, showing that everything bad happening is due to the lustful nature of womankind and failing to restrain them. Although a murder happens, the sentence structure leaves it unclear whether Jason or Medea are killed. The older German text, the *Liet von Troye*, erases nearly all traces of problematic behaviour, especially the monologue and the ending, dramatically shortening its sources and probably writing the only medieval 'happy end' for Medea. Here, the end is not commented by the narrator/translator, and instead, a translator's comment is found at the description of Jason's and Medea's first night, judging it as not fit for narration. The younger one, the *Trojanerkrieg*, includes Medea's murders and depicts them as justified revenge but without focusing on the betrayed Medea's feelings. Due to the additional details of this version, the translator's comment is more specific in its condemnation of Jason's infidelity, yet also mourns his death.

However, the four translations containing Medea's lament seem to agree with Benoît that its relocation to an earlier part of the story renders the events after her marriage to Jason less important. This also leaves space in the conclusions for each of the narrators and translators to pass their differing judgments on each of the characters and their deeds. The *Kunstgriff* is used to avoid certain details, but maybe also to suit the conventions of medieval

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[122] See also chapters 6 (Goldwyn) and 7 (Hoogenboom) in this volume.

romances and poems, in which the difficult feelings involved with courting are of more interest than the life of a married couple.[123]

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4

Troy Translated,
Troy Transformed

Rewriting the Aeneid
in Medieval Ireland

SUSANNAH L. WRIGHT

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EDIEVAL IRISH PROSE retellings of the story of Troy are among
the earliest surviving vernacular adaptations of Latin literature.
These texts exemplify a range of approaches to their source ma-
terial – from close reproduction to relatively free recasting – and generally
appear to have originated in monastic environments. Given their subject
matter and likely circumstances of production, the Irish classical adaptations
present fertile ground for consideration of medieval Christian engagement
with folktale and the fantastic, 'Christianization' of Greco-Roman mytho-
logical themes, and processes of translation across languages and cultures.
Even so, the profoundly imaginative ways in which they reshape the classical
tradition largely have yet to be analyzed through the lens of modern trans-
lation theory.

This chapter will examine one representative Middle Irish Troy narrative
with an eye toward its strategies of translation and adaptation. *Imtheachta
Aeniasa* ("The Adventures of Aeneas"), typically dated to the twelfth or
perhaps late eleventh century,[1] reworks Virgil's *Aeneid* into a new and

[1] For the date of this text, see Poppe 1995, 30–33; Poli 1981, 1001–2.

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more linear account of its hero's deeds. The Irish version engages closely with the Latin text of Virgil while also reframing its content to fit the conventions of medieval historiography and prose saga. The argument that follows will apply the concepts of domestication and foreignization to two sites of cross-cultural negotiation in the text: the role of the divine and the presence of fantastical or mythological elements. By illustrating the varied kinds of translation practice at play in *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, the resulting investigation draws attention to the creativity and richness that characterize this and other medieval Irish adaptations of the myths associated with Troy, thereby shedding light on a significant and often-overlooked area of vernacular reception.

4.1 THE TEXT IN CONTEXT:
CLASSICAL ADAPTATION IN MEDIEVAL IRELAND

A large number of medieval Irish classical adaptations survive, dating from roughly the eleventh to fourteenth centuries CE.[2] In addition to our text of focus, these include *Togail Troí* ("The Destruction of Troy")*, a reworking of Dares the Phrygian that exists in multiple recensions; *Merugud Uilixis meic Leirtis* ("The Wandering of Ulysses son of Laertes"), a strikingly original rendering of the story of Odysseus; *In Cath Catharda* ("The Civil War"), a retelling of Lucan's *Civil War*; and *Togail na Tebe* ("The Destruction of Thebes"), an adaptation of Statius's *Thebaid*. Further examples involve the career of Alexander the Great (*Scéla Alaxandair*, "The Tale of Alexander"); the boyhood deeds of Achilles (*Robo maith Aichil mac Péil*, "Good was Achilles, son of Peleus"); the re-founding of Troy by Hector's son Astyanax (*Don Tres Troí*, "On the Third Troy"); the tale of the Minotaur (*Sgél in Mínaduir*, "The Story of the Minotaur"); and the misdeeds of the house of Atreus (*Fingal Chlainne Tanntail*, "The Kin-Slaying of the Family of Tantalus").[3] Several of these texts are either older than or roughly contemporaneous with the

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[2] These adaptations are concisely outlined at O'Connor 2014, 13–17. Other such overviews include Stanford 1970, 35–38; Ní Mhaonaigh 2006; Hillers 2010, 40–44; Miles 2011, 51–66.

[3] O'Connor 2014, 13–16.

earliest such reworkings produced on the continent.[4] While Irish sources of this type survive in the greatest numbers, the Middle Welsh *Ystorya Dared* ("The History of Dares") is a notable example of a classical adaptation from medieval Wales.[5]

These texts are typically assumed to have been written in monastic settings, where classical learning would have been most readily available in Ireland during this period.[6] Some have been tentatively associated with particular monastic centers, while the origins of others remain obscure. Despite all that is unknown about their methods and places of production, the very existence of such works, along with their impressive number and variety, bears witness to a high degree of interest in and engagement with the classical literary past, especially Greek legendary history.[7] Several of these texts, including *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, are often grouped together in the manuscripts to form what has been called an incipient Troy cycle.[8]

As scholars have similarly observed regarding other vernacular traditions,[9] medieval Celtic notions of translation seem to have been fairly far removed from modern conceptions of the process. 'Faithfulness' to the original, at least in a strict sense, does not appear to have been a central consideration, and as a result, these texts are more commonly called 'adaptations' or 're-workings' than 'translations'.[10] As Barbara Hillers has stated, "none of these works are 'translations' in our sense of word-for-word correspondence; they are more or less free adaptations which have been altered structurally, as well

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[4] For the dating of the medieval Irish classical adaptations and their relationship with parallel vernacular translation movements in medieval France and elsewhere, see O'Connor 2014, 4–5, 13–17.

[5] For the Troy narrative in medieval Wales, see Fulton 2011, 138–44; 2014, 52–56.

[6] For the relevance of ecclesiastical centers of learning in medieval Ireland to these adaptations, see Ní Mhaonaigh 2006, 7–9.

[7] Hillers 2014, 85.

[8] See Poppe 1995, 3–11 for this idea and the placement of *Imtheachta Aeniasa* in the Book of Ballymote, where it appears alongside *Togail Troí*, *Merugud Uilixis*, and the Irish Alexander compilation.

[9] For medieval translation practices beyond the Celtic tradition, see Campbell & Mills (eds) 2012 and Beer (ed.) 2019.

[10] Hillers 1992, 63. See also O'Connor 2014, 17–22 for a discussion of medieval Irish approaches to classical adaptation.

as stylistically, to fit in with native narrative tradition".[11] Since the degree of structural and stylistic modification varies widely from text to text, the medieval Irish classical adaptations can be viewed as occupying places on a continuum ranging from narratives that are closely aligned with their sources to essentially independent tales. As we will see, *Imtheachta Aeniasa* would be situated nearer to the former pole, while many other texts lean more toward the latter.[12]

On the whole, the Irish retelling is fairly close to Virgil and exhibits a high level of engagement with the *Aeneid* – so much so, in fact, that its existence has been used as a piece of evidence to support the availability of the Virgilian text in medieval Ireland.[13] Even though the content of *Imtheachta Aeniasa* is in the end not far removed from its classical epic source material, the text nevertheless makes substantial alterations that reflect a process of dramatic reworking. The most prominent of the adapter's many modifications involve the structure of the newly-created Irish text. The complex shape of the *Aeneid*'s opening books is well known: the narrative begins *in medias res* with Juno's rage-driven visit to Aeolus, and only once the shipwrecked Trojan refugees reach Dido's court does Virgil recount his hero's Trojan past and wanderings at sea. After Aeneas's tale has been told in Books 2 and 3 through a frame device that mirrors the extended inset narrative of *Odyssey* 9–12, the remaining events unfold in a roughly chronological fashion. In this pattern of narration, the reader does not learn the full story of Aeneas's journeys until the end of Book 3, and even then only through the embedded accounts of the hero himself.

This ornate mode of organization seems to have been unsatisfying to the Irish redactor, who divides the first few books of the *Aeneid* into their component parts and develops an entirely new structure governed by cause and effect rather than intricate literary representation. In this new model, the events of *Aeneid* 2 and 3 are logically and temporally anterior to those

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[11] Hillers 1992, 63.

[12] One such example is *Merugud Uilixis meic Leirtis*, which has been described by Robert Meyer as holding "only a few waifs and strays of the Homeric account" (1958, xiv).

[13] Miles 2011, 22: "the Middle Irish translation of the *Aeneid* proves ... that the poet's greatest poem was read in Ireland at least in the eleventh or twelfth century."

of *Aeneid* 1 and then *Aeneid* 4, and the Virgilian order must be reshuffled accordingly. By making these revisions, the Irish adapter creates a new tale of Aeneas that begins with the aftermath of the fall of Troy and carries him straight through his trials at sea to Dido's court. In Carthage, the hero tells of Troy's destruction and summarizes his journey (much more briefly than in *Aeneid* 3, since the details are already known to the reader), and we return to a modified Virgilian scheme thereafter. The resulting narrative structure, illustrated in the table below, might seem more historical than that of the *Aeneid*: instead of utilizing a highly recursive model, as Virgil does, the redactor of *Imtheachta Aeniasa* presents events in a largely linear fashion.[14]

Virgil's *Aeneid*	*Imtheachta Aeniasa*
Introduction and invocation (1.1–11)	Discussion of treachery (1–52)
	The Trojans' struggles at sea (52–209)
Juno's wrath and visit to Aeolus (1.12–80)	Juno's wrath and visit to Aeolus (210–21)
Storm and arrival at Carthage (1.81–756)	Storm and arrival at Carthage (221–407)
Aeneas tells of the fall of Troy (2.1–804)	Aeneas tells of the fall of Troy (408–654)
Aeneas tells of the Trojans' struggles at sea (3.1–718)	Aeneas summarizes the Trojans' struggles at sea (655–68)
Aeneas and Dido (4.1–705)	Aeneas and Dido (668–931)

FIGURE 1: Initial Narrative Structure in Virgil's *Aeneid* and *Imtheachta Aeniasa*

But a peek at even the first few pages of the Irish adaptation will suffice to demonstrate that the redactor has made a more dramatic set of changes still. Rather than beginning with any sort of grand programmatic statement or

[14] Poppe 1995, 6–7.

epic introduction, this tale of the adventures of Aeneas opens with a rather shocking surprise: a scene loosely modeled on the closing paragraphs of the account of Troy's fall attributed to Dares the Phrygian, in which the Greeks consider what they should do with Antenor, Aeneas, and the others who betrayed the city.[15] Though there are traces even in Virgil of an alternative ancient tradition that frames Aeneas as a traitor,[16] the version ascribed to Dares was particularly popular in the Middle Ages and widely taken to be an eyewitness report. As a result, Dares' representation of Aeneas as having been involved in a conspiracy at Troy would likely have been seen as a fixed component of the character's prehistory. The inclusion of this element at the start of *Imtheachta Aeniasa* thus provides vital contextual information, not unlike what modern readers might expect from an introduction or commentary.[17] Aside from its broader chronological restructuring and the incorporation of this supplementary material, *Imtheachta Aeniasa* follows the *Aeneid* fairly closely, and the author's in-depth engagement with Virgil is apparent throughout.

4.2 THEORIES OF TRANSLATION

Fully integrating the methods of modern translation theory into an analysis of medieval Irish approaches to literary adaptation will not be possible here: such an endeavor could easily be the subject of an entire monograph, or more. But two notions from this rich area of research can enhance our examination of the text at hand. These are the ideas of 'domesticating' and 'foreignizing' translation, which have been central to the field of translation studies since Lawrence Venuti's publication of *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* in 1995.

Their relatively recent popularization notwithstanding, the concepts themselves are by no means new. Perhaps the best-known articulation of a domesticating approach to translation remains that of John Dryden, who

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[15] Dares, *Fall of Troy* 42–43. For the issues of consistency and characterization posed by the addition of this episode at the beginning of *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, see Harris 1988–91, 25–28, 39–43; Poppe 1995, 6–10; LeBlanc 2019, 215; Wright 2023, 418–21.

[16] See Casali 1999, 206–11, along with Ahl 1989, 24–31; Galinsky (1969) 2015, 46–51; Ussani 1947, 116–23.

[17] Miles 2011, 57.

wrote in his 1697 "Dedication of the *Æneis*" that he had "endeavour'd to make *Virgil* speak such *English*, as he wou'd himself have spoken, if he had been born in *England*, and in this present age".[18] An influential formulation of the two strategies was later given in an 1813 lecture by Friedrich Schleiermacher, who stated that "there are only two [methods]. Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him".[19] Schleiermacher's twice-repeated qualifications – "as much as possible" – provide an important reminder that no translation can be domesticating or foreignizing in totality, while every such work necessarily constitutes a text distinct from its original.[20] Particular narrative moments, too, may call for their own translation methods.

As Venuti has observed, a fundamental divergence has been identified here:

> Schleiermacher allowed the translator to choose between a domesticating practice, an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to receiving cultural values, bringing the author back home, and a foreignizing practice, an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad.[21]

These two paths have been further explored by Antoine Berman, who marshalled a series of ethical arguments in favor of receiving "the Foreign as Foreign".[22] Though other theoretical perspectives have been formulated since, Venuti stands with Schleiermacher and Berman in preferring foreignizing translation as restraining what he calls the "ethnocentric violence of translation".[23]

The ethical concerns associated with different theories of translation will not be addressed in what follows, nor will the idea of translational violence.

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[18] Quoted from Kinsley (ed.) 1958, 1055.

[19] Translation by Lefevere 1977, 74.

[20] Venuti 2008, 15.

[21] Venuti 2008, 15.

[22] Berman 1999, 74: "l'Autre en tant qu'Autre".

[23] Venuti 2008, 16.

But the central ideas of domestication and foreignization – the former strategy integrating the translated text as much as possible into the literary context of a target culture, and the latter strategy maintaining a sense of the translated text's foreignness even in its new language and context – offer a useful way of describing medieval Irish classical adaptations without relying overmuch on ideas of 'faithfulness' or 'closeness' to the classical original. (As noted above, such notions tend to do insufficient justice to the imaginative dynamism of medieval translation practices.) With these considerations in mind, we embark in earnest upon our examination of *Imtheachta Aeniasa*.

4.3 DEALING WITH THE DIVINE

The so-called 'divine apparatus' is a central aspect of Greco-Roman epic, with the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Aeneid* all featuring the gods in major roles.[24] These figures not only add significance, weight, and sometimes even humor to the proceedings of a given epic, but also keep the plot moving: Aeneas's journey throughout the *Aeneid* is in many ways determined by the opposing forces of Juno's antagonism and Venus's support. For an adapter working within the context of medieval Celtic Christianity, the prominence of the gods in classical epic would presumably have posed a considerable challenge – not least because reactions to making classical texts available in the vernacular would likely not have been universally positive in some communities.[25] Possible ways of handling the Greco-Roman pantheon might have included retaining the gods and representing them much as they were depicted in earlier epic contexts; preserving their presence, but modifying their role or characterization to be more palatable for Christian audiences; replacing them with something else; or removing them from the narrative altogether. As we shall see, *Imtheachta Aeniasa* adopts a strategy most like the second of these possibilities.

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[24] The scholarship on the role of the gods in these texts is extensive. For a diachronic analysis of the gods in Greco-Roman epic, see Feeney 1991; for the divine apparatus in the *Iliad,* see Griffin 1980, 144–204, Lloyd-Jones 1983, 1–27, and Kearns 2004; for the *Odyssey,* see Kullmann 1985, Friedrich 1987, and Allan 2006; and for the *Aeneid*, see Coleman 1982 and Pollio 2021.

[25] Ní Mhaonaigh 2006, 7.

In the early twentieth century, Eleanor Hull's *Text Book of Irish Literature* described *Imtheachta Aeniasa* as a work "in the whole course of which the Immortals hardly appear at all".[26] Though the Irish classical adaptations do tend to minimize the divine and supernatural aspects of their Greek and Latin originals – as Hull rightly notes[27] – this characterization of *Imtheachta Aeniasa* is misleading. The place of the gods has been reduced, to be sure, but divine figures from Juno,[28] Venus,[29] Jove,[30] and Mercury[31] to Allecto,[32] Iris,[33] and even Fama, goddess of rumor,[34] nevertheless appear frequently and play significant roles in the text. Most often, their involvement is preserved where divine action is required to set major plot events in motion.[35] Additionally, characters make sacrifices in the traditional Roman manner, and many of the numerous omens and various prodigies that appear in the *Aeneid* are included.[36] Detailed genealogies and descriptions of the gods have largely been removed where they do not serve the plot,[37] along with quite a few scenes involving immortal characters; chief among the excised episodes are god-to-god conversations with no mortal witnesses.[38] It is hard to say, however, whether these omissions constitute a deliberate program of erasure or a consequence of the text's relative compression.

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[26] Hull 1908, 79. For the presence of the gods in *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, see also Poppe 1995, 17–18; Kobus 1995, 82–83; Meyer 1966, 99; Williams 1899, 419 and 421.

[27] Hull 1908, 79.

[28] See the following discussion for Juno's role in the text.

[29] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 291–307, 568–83, 1275–84, 1952–67, 3028–32, and elsewhere.

[30] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 757–65 and 2018–26.

[31] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 757–79 and 877–89.

[32] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 1625–1735. For the character of Allecto and the Irish *badb,* see LeBlanc 2019, 217–19.

[33] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 1154–75 and 1968–78.

[34] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 734–45.

[35] LeBlanc 2019, 217.

[36] Sacrifices, prophecies, and omens are mentioned at numerous points in *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, including (among many other instances) 67–89, 129–135, 484–500, 948–69, 1509–21, 2671–77, and 2981–92. Such moments are often identified explicitly as examples of ancient custom, as at 202, 961–62, 1275, 1512, and 2717 (Poppe 1995, 18n61).

[37] Poppe 1995, 17–19.

[38] Williams 1899, 421; Kobus 1995, 82–83.

As in the *Aeneid*, the deity involved most directly in the plot of *Imtheachta Aeniasa* is Juno. Though the treachery scene occupies in this text the conspicuous opening position granted to her rage in Virgil's poem, the goddess still appears at many key junctures. Significant instances of her intervention include asking Aeolus to wreck the Trojan fleet; sending Iris to incite the Trojan women; summoning Allecto to stir up war in Latium and receiving her report once the task is complete; sending Iris to tell Turnus Aeneas is gone; drawing Turnus away from the conflict by posing as Aeneas; and protecting Turnus in battle.[39]

Despite Juno's prominence in the text, several major episodes involving her have been omitted from the Irish version. One such instance is the agreement of Juno and Venus regarding the relationship between Aeneas and Dido.[40] In the *Aeneid*, Juno assures Venus that she will orchestrate a romantic encounter between the two by stirring up a storm while they are out on the hunt and ensuring that they take shelter in the same cave.[41] Juno's speech includes numerous first-person verbs and an emphatic use of the first-person pronoun,[42] underscoring her pledge to take up the task herself.[43] The storm scene shortly thereafter closely echoes Juno's words,[44] an effect that shows the goddess has done just as she promised. In the 'marriage' itself, Juno is even described as presiding over the wedding as an attendant and joining Tellus in giving the signal for the ceremonies to commence.[45] Her role in the proceedings is central and carries ominous weight: when the hero's chief divine antagonist plays the role of bridesmaid in his supposed wedding, certainly nothing good can result.

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[39] These actions occur at *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 210–21; 1154–58; 1611–38 and 1728–35; 1968–75; 2577–605; and 2305–6 and 2545–46.

[40] On the reception of the Dido episode in the medieval French tradition, see also chapter 8 of this volume (Söderblom Saarela).

[41] Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.115–27.

[42] The concentration of first-person verbs is highest at Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.122 ("I will pour" – "infundam"; "I will stir" – "ciebo") and 125–26 ("I will be there" – "adero"; "I will join" – "iungam"; "I will designate" – "dicabo"). The emphatic use of the first-person pronoun ("ego") occurs at Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.120.

[43] Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.115.

[44] See Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.161 (~ 4.120) and 4.165–66 (~ 4.124–25) for these echoes.

[45] Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.166–67.

In *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, by contrast, the pact between Juno and Venus is entirely absent. The otherwise close adaptation of the consummation scene, in fact, does not mention the scheming goddess even once:

> Then it came into Dido's mind to go a-hunting, Aeneas going with her; and to that Aeneas agreed [...] Now whilst [the party was] splendidly hunting the game, foul weather poured down upon them, and storm, hail, thunder, and lightning, so that they were seized with fear and terror, and they separated and fled each of them to his house, being unable to hunt. Also Aeneas and Dido went both together in flight to a cave that was near them; and they two consummated their union there, since what had been appointed[46] befell them.[47]

With Juno removed from the picture, the events of the hunt take shape organically. The idea for the outing develops entirely in the queen's own mind,[48] with the storm merely offering a convenient opportunity for the lovers to find themselves alone in a cave together. No choreography or elaborate maneuvering by a higher power is required, and the gestures toward marriage ritual seen in the Latin text are nowhere to be found.[49] In this version of the story, then, the misunderstanding between Aeneas and Dido is left to fall squarely on their own human shoulders: divine intervention is not to blame.[50]

That is not to say, though, that the gods have no role in their affair. Just as in the *Aeneid*, Venus initiates Dido's love for Aeneas by dispatching Cupid to encourage the queen's affection,[51] while Jove, Mercury, and (purportedly)

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[46] Calder's edition notes that both the text and translation are doubtful here.

[47] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 719–20 and 727–33: "Tic dono ara menmain do Didain teacht do shelg 7 Aenias imale fria, 7 foghabar o Aenias inni sin i cuibdius [...] In tan tra ba haine ic tafand na fiadmil nos-dortend in duibhsin 7 in gaillim 7 in casar 7 in toirneach 7 in tene gealan forro conus-rogab ecla 7 omun 7 gu roscailset 7 gu rotheichset cach dib dochum a thighi ar femeamh na sealga. Teid dono Aenias 7 Dido ina n-æn dis ar teiched i n-uaim bai i comfhochus doibh, 7 dogniad a n-æntaidh andsin a ndis uair dorala a ndesi[d] doib". Translation by Calder (1907) 1995, 47.

[48] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 719–20.

[49] See Austin 1979, 68–69 for the ritual features of the Latin account.

[50] Williams 1899, 421.

[51] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 382–401.

the ghost of Anchises are all involved in their ultimate parting.[52] But immediate responsibility for their clandestine tryst is not attributed to the gods – a modification that can perhaps be explained as either compression or moralization. The attraction between Aeneas and Dido is well established by this point in the text; as a result, to a redactor condensing a work of such exceptional length, Juno's intervention to bring them together might seem superfluous and therefore ripe for omission. From the perspective of Christian morality, we may also wonder whether the Irish adapter would have felt fully comfortable with the idea of a god – even a Roman one – promoting and orchestrating the disastrous liaison of these two widowed characters.

The handling of Juno, the most prominent deity in both *Imtheachta Aeniasa* and the *Aeneid*, epitomizes the redactor's approach to the gods throughout: scenes of essential plot relevance are typically retained, while others are silently passed over or shortened considerably. In general, the representation of the Greco-Roman gods when they are present aligns closely with their depiction in the *Aeneid*. This foreignizing strategy applies even to divinities who are less than anthropomorphic in appearance, such as Fama and Allecto:

> A monster, horrible, huge, is [Fama]. She walks on the ground with her head among the clouds covered with plumes from top to toe, an eye under every plume watching the deeds of everyone, and a mouth and a tongue for every eye a-telling these deeds, an ear for every eye of them, a-listening to these tales.[53]

> When Allecto heard these words that Turnus had spoken to her, she was seized with anger and indignation against him; and she changed herself into her own form, and loathsome, dreadful was that form. Rough, horrible, wrinkled was her

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[52] Jove enlists Mercury to confront Aeneas at *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 757–65; Mercury addresses the hero at 765–77 and 877–89. As in the *Aeneid* (4.351–53), the ghost of Anchises does not appear directly but is mentioned in one of Aeneas's speeches to Dido (820–21).

[53] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 736–40: "Torothor grana dermhair iside, 7 si ac imteacht for lar 7 a cend etir na nellaib, lan do chluim o ind co bond, suil fo gach cluim ic forcoimet gnim caich, 7 bel 7 tenga gacha sula ac indisin na ngnim sin, cluas gacha sula dib i[c] cloisteacht na scel sin". Translation by Calder (1907) 1995, 47.

face; wild, sharp, bloody, deep red, unresting were the angry, flaming eyes that were in her head. Tresses of poisonous serpents, that was the hair about her head.[54]

In these passages, the two frightful goddesses are represented in all their monstrously terrifying glory. The details of each description are thoroughly Virgilian: in the *Aeneid*, as in *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, Fama is a horrible and huge monster who walks on the ground with her head among the clouds and is completely covered in feathers, eyes, mouths, tongues, and ears,[55] while the true form of Allecto, which she reveals after Turnus's words cause her to blaze with sudden anger, includes flaming eyes and hair of serpents.[56] The adapter's account of her appearance is further enhanced by the use of alliterative phrases, a characteristic technique of elevated medieval Irish prose.[57] The descriptions of both deities closely render their Latin source and reflect a willingness to engage with the fantastic, a topic that we will consider more thoroughly in the section that follows.

Even in this generally accurate presentation of the gods of the *Aeneid*, there are nevertheless some instances where the medieval redactor's perspective on the power – or lack thereof – of classical Roman divinities is made clear. One such case is the meeting between Aeneas and his former helmsman Palinurus in the underworld. At the end of *Aeneid* 5, Palinurus is shoved headlong to his death by the god Somnus.[58] Though readers of the poem know that he has been killed by a god, and Aeneas himself suspects

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[54] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 1683–89: "O rochuala Electo na briathra sain roraidh Tuirn fria, nos-geb ferg 7 londus fris, 7 nos-dealband ina delb fen 7 ba hetig aduathmar in delb sin. Ba garb granda grugach a gnuis. Batar feochra feighi fuilide forderga foluaimnecha na ruisc londa lasarda robatar ina cind. Trillsi do nathrachaib nemi is e folt bai imon cend". Translation by Calder (1907) 1995, 107.

[55] These features of Fama appear at Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.176–77 and 4.181–83.

[56] These aspects of Allecto's appearance are given at Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.448–50.

[57] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 1686–87: "ba garb granda grugach a gnuis" ("rough, horrible, wrinkled was her face"), "feochra feighi fuilide forderga foluaimnecha" ("wild, sharp, bloody, deep red, unresting"), "londa lasarda" ("angry, flaming"). Translation by Calder (1907) 1995, 107. See Poppe 2014, 33–34 on this passage and Poppe 1995, 19–22 on the use of alliterative phrases in *Imtheachta Aeniasa* more widely.

[58] Virgil, *Aeneid* 5.833–71.

as much, Palinurus's ghost is nevertheless adamant that divine involvement had nothing to do with it:

> Aeneas, barely seeing who it was
> through all the gloom, addressed the anguished man:
> "Who was the god that snatched you, Palinurus,
> and drowned you in the water's vast expanse?
> Tell me. Apollo has not ever lied;
> yet he misled me with this one response,
> when he declared you would be safe at sea
> and reach the shores of Italy unharmed.
> Is this how he fulfills his promises?"
> The helmsman said, "Anchises' son, my captain,
> the oracle of Phoebus did not lie,
> nor did a god submerge me in the waves".[59]

Palinurus goes on to claim that Phoebus upheld his promise in the end: following his tumble overboard, the helmsman drifted to the shores of Italy unharmed – even if only to be attacked and killed immediately upon his arrival.[60]

When Palinurus perishes in *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, his death is likewise assigned to the intervention of Somnus.[61] Here, however, his shade answers Aeneas's questions very differently:

> Moreover, Palinurus came to him, and he was gloomy, sad, sorrowful, wretched;
> and Aeneas asked of him what was the reason of his falling from the ship into the

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[59] Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.340–48: "hunc ubi uix multa maestum cognouit in umbra, / sic prior adloquitur: 'quis te, Palinure, deorum / eripuit nobis medioque sub aequore mersit? / dic age. namque mihi, fallax haud ante repertus, / hoc uno responso animum delusit Apollo, / qui fore te ponto incolumem finisque canebat / uenturum Ausonios. en haec promissa fides est?' / ille autem: 'neque te Phoebi cortina fefellit, / dux Anchisiade, nec me deus aequore mersit'". Translation by McGill & Wright (forthcoming).

[60] Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.355–62.

[61] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 1221–39.

sea. Palinurus said that Somnus put him [overboard] by force while he slept, and he took the rudder with him.[62]

In a key departure from the Latin original, the Irish ghost of Palinurus does not hesitate to attribute his demise to Somnus. The promises of Apollo and the helmsman's death at the hands of hostile Italians are not mentioned, leaving the blame to rest solely on the god of sleep.[63] This could constitute a correction on the redactor's part, since the Virgilian response of Palinurus can be read as a narrative inconsistency (as has been recognized in scholarship on the poem since at least the time of Servius).[64] It is equally possible, however, that the adapter simply lacked an incentive that was operative for his source poet: in a medieval Christian context, there was no need to protect the reputation of a Greco-Roman deity from charges of capriciousness. Now that the ancient pantheon is no longer in active religious play, Palinurus's death at the hands of a god can be called exactly what it is without charges of sacrilege or impiety.

To close our consideration of the gods in *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, a few minor instances of domesticating practice are worthy of note. When the Trojans arrive in Italy, the genealogy of Latinus – given through Saturn by way of Faunus and Picus in the *Aeneid*[65] – is traced back to Noah through the line of Ham: "Latinus, son of Faunus, son of Picus, son of Neptune, son of Saturn, son of Apollo (?), son of Picus, son of Pel, son of Tres, son of Tros, son of Mizraim, son of Ham, son of Noah".[66] This is an example of a

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[62] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 1331–34: "Dorala do dono Palamurus, 7 se dubach dobronach toirrsech taidiuir, 7 roiarfaigh Aenias de cid fodera a toitim asin luing isin fairgi. Roraid Palamurus Somnus dia chur ar egin ina chodlud co ruc in sdiuir lais". Translation by Calder (1907) 1995, 85.

[63] Rather than dying by force, the Irish Palinurus drowns on his fourth day of drifting at sea (*Imtheachta Aeniasa* 1335–36).

[64] For a survey of proposed solutions to the discrepancy, see Perkell 2004, 134–40. See also Kobus 1995, 79–80 for the redactor's apparent familiarity with Servius.

[65] Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.47–49.

[66] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 1478–80: "Laitin mac Puin meic Picc meic Neptuin meic Saduirn meic Pal loir meic Pic meic Pel meic Tres meic Trois meic Mesraim meic Caimh meic Noe". Translation by Calder (1907) 1995, 93–95. For this genealogy, which appears in similar forms elsewhere in the Book of Ballymote, see Poppe 1995, 19; and for No-

specifically Christianizing form of domestication, in which the translator has integrated Latinus and his divine ancestors into Old Testament genealogy. The Etruscan ruler Tarchon, meanwhile, is elsewhere connected with native Celtic religious practice by his identification as a druid ("drui").[67] Somewhat later, after Aeneas has sworn an oath by the gods of heaven and earth, the seas, rivers, and streams, and his own valor,[68] Latinus responds by vowing that the truce between the Trojans and Latins will not be broken "till heaven will fall to earth, and the deluge come over the world,"[69] calling to mind his own descent from Noah – but with an eschatological slant.

These cases represent minor instances of domestication in an overall strategy of foreignization as it relates to the gods. As we have seen, Greco-Roman deities remain very present in this text and play prominent plot-supporting roles, frequently serving as the device that moves the narrative ahead. Where they are included, the representations of divine figures – even menacing ones like Fama and Allecto – are fairly close to the Virgilian original. The Roman pantheon is kept largely intact and given permission to operate on its own terms, even in its new Celtic literary context.

4.4 FACING THE FANTASTIC

Now that we have considered the role of the divine in *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, we turn to a closely related topic: the presence of fantastical elements. To think first in terms of Greco-Roman epic more generally, scholars have long observed that the fantastic is not present to any great degree in the *Iliad*, where heroes slay one another on the battlefield in a manner that can include divine intervention but rarely takes a genuinely supernatural character.[70] That text well demonstrates that an epic involving the gods does

achic pedigrees attributing the origin of the Greco-Roman gods to Cham, see Myrick 1993, 164–72.

[67] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 2375–76 and 2392. See Meyer 1966, 102.

[68] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 2956–57.

[69] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 2965–66: "co tæth nemh dochum talmhan 7 co ti in diliu tarin domun". Translation by Calder (1907) 1995, 185.

[70] As Griffin has stated (1977, 40), "the *Iliad* is notably more cautious with the fantastic". The perplexing encounter between Achilles and Scamander in *Iliad* 21 is one of the few episodes that can be said to belong in this category, though other moments warrant consideration. See Zanon 2019 for a recent reappraisal of the situation.

not necessarily have to include elements of a fantastical or folkloric nature. In classical epic from the *Odyssey* onward, however, adventures from the world of folktale became a common component,[71] and both the *Odyssey* and *Aeneid* involve episodes that are truly fantastical or supernatural. These include encounters with ghosts, visits to the Underworld, and confrontations with mythological creatures, such as Harpies, Sirens, or witches. Though such scenes sometimes overlap closely with those involving the divine, their fundamentally fanciful character is remote from actual religious practice and thus warrants separate treatment.

Regarding the gods, we have seen that *Imtheachta Aeniasa* follows Virgil's text carefully while making only occasional domesticating adjustments to adapt it to the Christian context of the medieval Celtic world. On a broad level, this foreignizing tendency also holds true for the fantastic, but a few of the most overtly supernatural episodes from the *Aeneid* exhibit a degree of demythologization in their new Irish shape. This trend may have to do with Poppe's characterization of *Imtheachta Aeniasa* as operating within the world of Irish historical narrative:[72] if the text is to be interpreted this way, it may certainly include a few fantastical elements (as other such works in the Celtic tradition were known to do), but it should likely not stray too far from the realm of possibility.

Some of the most fantastical portions of the *Aeneid* occur during Aeneas's wanderings in the first half of the poem, which is appropriately often called 'Odyssean'. One incident in this category is the encounter with the Harpies, whose appalling filthiness is vividly depicted. These fearsome creatures are more than just unpleasant birds, as the opening lines of the scene make clear: they have the features of maidens, along with hooked hands, pale faces, and a constant overflow of disgusting excrement.

> No other monster is more terrible;
> no fiercer scourge or fury of the gods
> has ever raised itself from Stygian waters –
> birds with girls' faces, bellies that discharge

[71] See, e.g., Page 1973 and Reinhardt (1948) 1996.
[72] See Poppe 1995, 1–16.

disgusting waste, hooked claws for hands, and cheeks
forever pale with hunger.[73]

When Aeneas and his companions first arrive on the Strophades, they are
excited to find the islands full of unsupervised cattle and goats.[74] As soon
as they have slain some of the livestock and attempt to consume their meal,
however, the monsters descend in a series of sudden swooping attacks and
pollute the food with their filth. Eventually, the Trojan group is forced to
wage a brief battle against the Harpies, which proves more challenging than
expected when their enemies' feathers turn out to be impervious to their
weapons:

> My soldiers launched a new and strange attack,
> to stain those reeking seabirds with our steel.
> Their feathered backs deflected every blow.
> They swiftly flew up to the stars, unharmed,
> and left half-eaten spoils and trails of filth.[75]

Once Aeneas and his men manage to gain victory, the Harpy Celaeno
delivers a menacing prophecy.[76] She invokes the authority of Phoebus to
predict that the Trojans will not find their ultimate home before hunger
forces them to consume their tables – an ominous warning that will later
meet a harmless actualization in *Aeneid* 7.[77] The episode as a whole is

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[73] Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.214–18: "tristius haud illis monstrum, nec saeuior ulla / pestis et
ira deum Stygiis sese extulit undis. / uirginei uolucrum uultus, foedissima uentris /
proluuies uncaeque manus et pallida semper / ora fame". Translation by McGill &
Wright (forthcoming).

[74] Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.219–21.

[75] Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.240–44: "inuadunt socii et noua proelia temptant, / obscenas pelagi
ferro foedare uolucris. / sed neque uim plumis ullam nec uulnera tergo / accipiunt,
celerique fuga sub sidera lapsae / semesam praedam et uestigia foeda relinquunt".
Translation by McGill & Wright (forthcoming).

[76] Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.245–57.

[77] Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.255–57. The prophecy proves much less dire than expected at Virgil,
Aeneid 7.107–34, where Aeneas attributes the prophetic utterance to Anchises rather
than Celaeno.

thoroughly disconcerting, owing in large part to the nauseatingly realistic depiction of the Harpies' squalor.

In *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, the basic structure of the scene is the same, though it is characteristically condensed. As in the *Aeneid*, the Trojans come upon an island rich in sheep, cattle, and goats, with no one tending the flocks.[78] The moment that the Trojans attempt to eat, they are attacked by birdlike monsters whose onslaught they struggle to combat:

> Thus was that island – full of cattle, sheep, and goats, with no one to protect them or to guard them. Among the Trojans therefore, they made much flesh-meat from these herds. Now after that, when their portions of food were brought before them, they saw bearing down upon them from the hills a flock of noisome birds – Harpies they are named – that screamed and snatched their portions of food from them out of their hands, and left their filth upon their platters. The Trojans seized their shields and swords, and got quit of them by dint of fighting.[79]

Importantly, however, the Harpies are here described without any reference whatsoever to their part-human nature: the Trojans' food is snatched away and their meal sullied by repulsive birds,[80] but the text provides no indication that their adversaries are anything more than this. The details of the Harpies' half-human, half-bird physical composition are missing, as is the specification that their feathers cannot be wounded by mortal weapons.[81] Further, the creatures have now been deprived of speech, with the arresting prophecy of the Harpy Celaeno being excised as well.[82] If this passage repre-

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[78] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 108–10. The parallel Virgilian moment is Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.219–21.

[79] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 108–16: "Is amlaidh robai in indsi sin, lan do buaib 7 do cæraib 7 gabhraib, gan nech aga n-anacul no aga n-imcoimet. Dogniat dono feolbach imdha dona hindilib sin agna Troiandaib. In tan tra iarsin tuctha a mbiadh[a] ina fiadnaise, co n-accatar chucu dona slebiu elta do enaib granda—Airpi a n-anmand side—7 siat for grechaid—7 srengaid a mbiada uaithib asa lamaib, 7 fagbaid a salchar fora miasaib, 7 gabait na Troiandaigh a sciathu 7 a claidme, 7 nos-dicuirit uaidibh a l-los comluind". Translation by Calder (1907) 1995, 9.

[80] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 113: "enaib granda".

[81] These details are presented at Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.216–18 and 3.242–44, respectively.

[82] This may have to do with Aeneas's later attribution of the prophecy to his own father (see footnote 77 above). Since the reassignment of Celaeno's predictions to Anchises

sented a reader's first or only encounter with the Harpies, there would be no reason to suspect anything fantastical about them at all: the Irish adaptation has reduced them to little more than filthy and bothersome birds.

Another transformation from Aeneas's travels involves Mount Aetna. In the *Aeneid*, the constant thrashing of the monstrous Enceladus, trapped beneath the mountain, is the cause of its terrifying fires and quakes.

> Tradition has it that Enceladus,
> blasted by lightning, lies beneath the weight
> of giant Etna, which exhales its fire
> above his body from its shattered forges;
> and every time he turns his weary frame,
> Sicily shakes and cloaks the sky in smoke.[83]

The redactor of *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, however, offers a different explanation:

> An ever-living fire always [burns] in that mountain, and [columns] of its black smoke and flame burst at all times forth from caves and craters of that mountain. God does that to make known to men that the fire of hell is eternal; for this is what some allege, that Mount Etna is one of the doors of hell.[84]

Much like the *Aeneid*, *Imtheachta Aeniasa* exhibits a preoccupation with the physical unpleasantness of Mount Aetna. The Irish adapter's description of the ever-living fire and columns of fumes and flames that plague the area

constitutes an inconsistency in Virgil's narrative, the Irish redactor could well have recognized the problem and elected to solve it by removing Celaeno's speech altogether.

[83] Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.578–82: "fama est Enceladi semustum fulmine corpus / urgeri mole hac, ingentemque insuper Aetnam / impositam ruptis flammam exspirare caminis, / et fessum quotiens mutet latus, intremere omnem / murmure Trinacriam et caelum subtexere fumo". Translation by McGill & Wright (forthcoming).

[84] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 141–45: "Teni bithbeo 'sin tshleb sin dogress, co maided a duibdiad 7 a lasra a huamaib 7 a haircelaib in tshlebi sin amach dogress. Dia fhis do dainib conad do sut[h]ine tine iffirn dogni dia sin, ar is ed aderait araile conad dorus du dhoirsib iffirnd sliab Eathna". Translation by Calder (1907) 1995, 11. See Poppe 1995, 18–19 for this passage.

around the volcano directly echoes Virgil's mention of constant smoke and fiery quakes immediately before the passage quoted here.[85] Both texts, too, place the fantastical explanation for Aetna's flames in the mouth of someone other than the narrator. In the *Aeneid*, the source of the Enceladus story is rumor ("tradition has it"),[86] while the Irish adapter attributes the tale to the allegations of some ("this is what some allege").[87]

But despite the surface-level similarities between these two accounts, the folkloric suggestions they carry are thoroughly different. Rooted in Christian writings and the Irish tradition, the new mythical geography of *Imtheachta Aeniasa* no longer assigns the smoke and flames of Aetna to the eternal writhing of Enceladus: instead, Aetna has become the site of one of the doors to hell.[88] This represents not only a case of domesticating translation in a typically foreignizing text, but also one of genuine Christianization. A location with its own mythological history in the Greco-Roman past has now been rewritten and reframed to hold a new religious significance.[89]

Other aspects of the landscape of Aeneas's journey in *Imtheachta Aeniasa* are subject to changes that cannot be addressed in detail here. Some constitute instances of demythologization, as is the case with Scylla and Charybdis; though the straits flanked by these monsters are depicted vividly in *Aeneid* 3 and *Odyssey* 12, the Irish adaptation treats them as little more than natural obstacles.[90] Other locations on Aeneas's route are presented with an awareness of fantastical traditions, but with some aspects of Greco-Roman mythology changed. This occurs in the description of Circe's isle, where the

[85] Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.570–77.

[86] Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.578: "fama est".

[87] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 144: "ar is ed aderait araile".

[88] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 145: "dorus du dhoirsib iffirnd".

[89] See also a Middle English romance discussed in chapter 1 in this volume (Scheijnen), where the superhuman powers of Achilles are represented as originating from the dark magic of hell.

[90] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 136–39: "And Aeneas came to his ships, and sailed on the sea till they reached the district of Italy, where dwelt Greeks; and they skirted the coast of Italy till they came between Scylla and Charybdis, and they ran aground there, till power of rowing and sailing brought them away". Translation by Calder (1907) 1995, 11.

witch is portrayed as having transformed the crew of Ulysses into wolves rather than swine, her beast of choice in the *Odyssey*.[91]

A final instance of the fantastic in *Imtheachta Aeniasa* involves one of the most evocative scenes from *Aeneid* 3: the encounter with Achaemenides, an invented member of Ulysses' crew abandoned during their escape from the Cyclops Polyphemus. As Virgil's hero follows in the wake of the wandering Ulysses, the poet himself retraces the literary moves of his epic predecessor by crafting a Cyclops episode of his own. The bedraggled Achaemenides provides a harrowing account of the monster, reporting how he watched the Cyclops smash two men against the rocks, devour their limbs, and belch up bits of gore mixed in with bloody wine.[92]

In *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, too, Aeneas and his men meet Achaemenides and hear the story of his horrifying experiences:

> We landed here and went into Cyclops' cave; and he seized two of us, and dashed them out of his hands against the rocks of the cave; so that small fragments were made of them, and he ate them raw, and I myself saw their limbs in the openings that were between his teeth. Then he drank wine, and went to sleep in his cave after it. We could not imagine Ulysses departing from him without avenging his people upon him; and we approached him so as to surround him while he was asleep, belching out and slobbering his blood and vomit on his beard; one eye in his head as big as a Grecian battle-shield or a moon on the fifteenth. We wounded that eye and broke it, and, joyous, very terrified, we embarked. I was left unwittingly unnoticed by my folk, since I had strayed away from them.[93]

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[91] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 1458–64. The redactor likely bases his rendering on Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.15–20, which lists lions, swine, bears, and howling wolves as present on Circe's island.

[92] Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.613–54. The details noted here appear at 3.623–38.

[93] *Imtheachta Aeniasa* 154–65: "Dochuamar a tir sunda. Ron-la a n-uaim in Ciclop[ec]-dai, 7 tarraid dis uaind, 7 ros-gab asa glacaib fo cairrgib na huamad, co ndernait min-bruar dib, 7 co nus-duaid oma iat, 7 atconnarc-sa fen a mbuill etir na samlachaib fuil etir a fiaclaib, 7 ibid fin iarsin, 7 rochodail ina uaimh dia eis. Ni rofedamar-ni Uilix do teacht uad, gan digail a muintire fair; 7 dochuamair-ne dia indsaigid co rabamar uime, 7 se ina chodlad, ac bruchtaig 7 slamrad a fhola 7 a sgeithi fora ulchain, æn shuil ina chind medither cathsciath Gregda, no esca i coigid dec. Gonmaid in suil sin 7 brismid 7 tiagmaid uad anfailtig, imeclaigh, ar long, 7 rom-facbad-sa gan fis, gan

Here, the description of the creature's monstrous qualities is very similar to Virgil's version and exhibits no real sign of demythologization or domestication. In fact, there are hardly any discrepancies between Achaemenides' account in *Aeneid* 3 and his character's story in *Imtheachta Aeniasa*. The Irish redactor has treated the basic shape of the episode with careful attention, precisely preserving details like the number of men seized by the Cyclops and dashed against the rocks, Ulysses' unwillingness to depart without vengeance, the Cyclops' drunken sleep, and the wounding of his eye.[94] But, more notably, our adapter has also retained the most graphic and grisly features of the encounter. As in the *Aeneid*, there are chunks of human flesh stuck in the monster's teeth, he belches up blood and vomit in his sleep, and his one eye is as big as a Greek battle-shield (or a full moon, which appears in place of the Latin text's reference to the sun).[95] No reduction of the fantastical elements is occurring here: the Irish Cyclops is every bit as menacing and grotesque as his Latin counterpart.

In this case, then, the Irish redactor has made the fundamentally foreignizing choice to render Virgil's narrative as closely as possible and to retain mythological aspects that connect it with its original context. Though *Imtheachta Aeniasa* is remarkable for its attentive engagement with the Latin text and does typically lean toward foreignization, other episodes we have considered in this section – the Harpies, Mount Aetna, Scylla and Charybdis, and Circe – exhibit a variety of translation strategies ranging from general demythologization to outright Christianization.[96] Our final example serves as a reminder to be wary of speaking too broadly about translation approaches in texts like this. Though overall trends can be identified, no translator applies a given strategy universally, and a wide range of methods can be utilized even within the body of a single work.

fairiugud do[m] muintir, uair rochuadus ar sechran uaidhib". Translation by Calder (1907) 1995, 11–13.

[94] These features of the Latin account appear at Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.623–25, 3.628–29, 3.630, and 3.635–36.

[95] These further details are given at Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.627, 3.631–33, and 3.637.

[96] Goldwyn (chapter 6 in this volume) discusses the reception of several of these characters in Byzantine literature.

When examined in this light, *Imtheachta Aeniasa* can be seen to demonstrate an intriguing degree of internal variation in terms of translation methods. The Middle Irish adaptation of the *Aeneid* restructures the poem's events into a new chronological narrative that evokes the tradition of medieval historiography, but it does not historicize completely: the Greco-Roman gods and Aeneas's imaginative adventures remain to lend the work a sense of the ancient, the fanciful, and the mysterious. Rather than transposing the story of Aeneas into a more familiar context or eliminating the elements a medieval Irish audience might have found most unusual, the redactor has elected to leave largely intact the areas most likely to cause perplexity – like the Roman pantheon – and to refrain from smoothing out all possible difficulties for his readers. Yet even within this broader strategy of foreignization, there are some surprises to be found: missing encounters with the gods, demythologized representations of fantastic obstacles, Christian rewritings of mythological locations, and more.

Though much further work remains to be done, this investigation of *Imtheachta Aeniasa* illustrates that medieval approaches to Greco-Roman Troy narratives, and to classical literature more generally, cannot be neatly described in terms of any one framework of adaptation or reworking. Such reinterpretations are often characterized by a high degree of variation, and the disparate strategies they adopt make them all the more compelling. No text emerges into its new context looking just as it did when first produced, and the very features that make the *Aeneid* or other ancient works relevant to medieval Celtic audiences provide opportunities for significant revision and reshaping. A figure known for his dutifulness in antiquity becomes even more complex through the acknowledgment of alternative tales of his treachery; foul bird-maidens turn out to be little more than frustrating fowl; an ever-flaming volcano becomes not the forge of the gods' blacksmiths, but the door to hell. As adapters and translators draw upon the substance of classical epic to craft new versions artfully suited to their own times and cultures, the ancient works themselves are at once translated and, in the process, utterly transformed.

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Athena Disenchanted

Eustathios of Thessalonike on Ethical and Rhetorical Prudence in Homer and Beyond

Baukje van den Berg

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FOR MANY CENTURIES, a large bronze statue of the goddess Athena stood in the Forum of Constantine, the heart of the Byzantine capital. According to the tenth-century poet Constantine of Rhodes, this statue of a helmeted Athena accompanied by serpents and a Gorgon came from his homeland, from the goddess' sanctuary at Lindos.[1] The first book of the *Patria*, a tenth-century collection of notes and anecdotes about the history, statues, and buildings of Constantinople, records that Constantine the Great placed two statues of Pallas Athena in the same forum.[2] One of them might be the statue described in the second book of the same collection, where we find the goddess represented with helmet, shield, spear, and a Gorgon head on her breast plate. These, according to the anonymous author, were allegorical representations of Athena's steadfastness, courage, wisdom, and intelligence.[3] The historian Niketas Choniates describes the statue of Athena in the Forum as likewise displaying her warlike attributes and relates how the eventual destruction of the statue was due not to invading crusaders but to the inhabitants of Constantinople themselves. In his account of the

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[1] Constantine of Rhodes, *On Constantinople and the Church of the Holy Apostles* 153–62. For bibliography on the statue of Athena in Constantinople, see James ad loc. (2012, 106–07).

[2] *Patria* 1.46; translation in Berger 2013.

[3] *Patria* 2.3; cf. *Suda* α 727.

events leading up to the capture of the city in 1204, Choniates narrates how a drunken mob, ignorant of the points of the compass, smashed the statue, thinking that it beckoned the western armies into the city.[4] Choniates gives us an appreciative *ekphrasis* of the statue's enchanting beauty, before castigating the crowd for its rash and misinformed actions:

> As the result of such misconceptions, they shattered the statue of Athena, or, rather, guilty of ever-worsening conduct and taking up arms against themselves, they discarded the patroness of manliness [*andreia*] and prudence [*phronesis*] even though she was but a symbol of these.[5]

Choniates here takes the allegorical reading of the *Patria* one step further, seeing in the crowd's demolition of the statue of Athena the obliteration of their own virtues of courage and prudence as represented by the goddess.[6]

Choniates' interpretation of Athena is firmly grounded in the long tradition of allegorical readings of ancient myth as we find them only a few decades earlier in the monumental Homeric commentaries of Eustathios of Thessalonike (ca. 1115–1195) and various works on ancient poetry by John Tzetzes (ca. 1110–1185).[7] Both Eustathios and Tzetzes begin with the assumption that poets such as Homer endowed their enchanting mythical fictions with a deeper allegorical meaning discoverable by expert exegetes like themselves. They generally distinguish three types of allegory: with historical allegory, true past events are turned into something more marvellous according to poetic convention; in the case of natural allegory, the mythical gods represent natural elements and parts of the cosmos (e.g. Zeus = ether; Hera = air; Apollo = sun); in ethical allegory, the gods symbolize emotions, intellectual faculties, and psychological forces (e.g. Zeus = the

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[4] Choniates, *History* 558.46–559.77. On the power of statues, see e.g. James 1996, with further bibliography.

[5] Choniates, *History* 559.74–77: Οἱ μὲν οὖν μετὰ τοιούτων κινημάτων τῆς διανοίας τὸ τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς συνέτριψαν ἄγαλμα, ἢ μᾶλλον τοῖς χείροσιν ἀεὶ προβαίνοντες καὶ καθ' ἑαυτῶν ὁπλῖται γινόμενοι τὴν ἀνδρείας καὶ φρονήσεως ἐπιστάτιν κἂν τοῖς τύποις αὐτοῖς ἀπεώσαντο. Translation by Magoulias 1984, slightly modified.

[6] On this episode in Choniates' *History*, see Papamastorakis 2009.

[7] On Eustathios and Tzetzes as scholars, see Pontani 2020, 460–67 and 452–59, respectively.

intellect; Ares = irrational emotion; Aphrodite = desire).[8] In ethical terms, Athena was commonly interpreted as *phronesis* or prudence, an interpretation already widespread in ancient exegesis.[9] Despite their ancient origins, such allegorical interpretations involved a significant amount of hermeneutic flexibility so that Byzantine exegetes could project contemporary ideas and values on the myths of Homer.[10] By exploring Eustathios' reading of the goddess Athena in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and putting it into dialogue with ideas on prudence in other Eustathian texts, this paper aims to demonstrate how allegorical interpretation could turn the stories of the Trojan War and the wanderings of Odysseus into vehicles for ethical reflection and moral education.[11]

5.1 TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF PRUDENCE: ATHENA, ACHILLES, AND ARISTOTLE

We find the most influential definition of the virtue of prudence in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, a text that enjoyed great popularity in Byzantium and was given new commentaries by twelfth-century scholars such as Eustratios of Nicaea and Michael of Ephesos.[12] In the sixth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle discusses the five intellectual virtues that belong to the rational part of the soul. Among them is prudence or practical wisdom (*phronesis*), which Aristotle defines by describing the qualities of a prudent man:

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[8] On allegory in the Homeric scholarship of Eustathios and Tzetzes, see e.g. Hunger 1954; Cesaretti 1991; Cullhed 2016, 25*–33*; Goldwyn 2017; Van den Berg 2022, 49–54, 163–80.

[9] See Buffière 1956, 279–89 and Wissmann 2009, 425–49 for Athena as prudence in ancient allegoresis. See also Murrin 2007, 500–03.

[10] Although within certain boundaries: Psellos' Christianizing interpretation of Homeric myth was strongly criticized by Tzetzes. See e.g. Cesaretti 1991, 127–40 and Savio 2020, 42–47.

[11] See also Van den Berg 2023.

[12] On twelfth-century commentaries on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, see the papers collected in Barber & Jenkins 2009; see also Trizio 2021, with further bibliography. For the Palaiologan period, see Xenophontos 2021.

[I]t is held to be the mark of a prudent man to be able to deliberate well about what is good and advantageous for himself, not in some one department, for instance what is good for his health or strength, but what is advantageous as a means to the good life in general.[13]

Aristotle explains that prudence does not involve invariable things and eternal truths but things that are variable and therefore require deliberation. Prudence is the ability to reflect and decide on the best course of action in the service of one's general well-being, and as such it relies heavily on foresight: after all, one needs to consider the consequences of certain courses of action if one wishes to make a good decision.[14] Because the factors involved are variable and particular rather than invariable and universal, one needs to gain experience in order to become good at deliberating, which is why *phronesis* is acquired with age.[15] As the ability to choose the best course of action towards certain ends, prudence is required for all other virtues, since, in Aristotle's view, virtue needs a practical application. One cannot simply *be* virtuous but being virtuous means *acting* in accordance with virtue—virtue equals action.[16]

Aristotle's definition of prudence has many points of contact with Eustathios' reading of Athena in the Homeric commentaries, as his interpreta-

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[13] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.5, 1140a25–28: δοκεῖ δὴ φρονίμου εἶναι τὸ δύνασθαι καλῶς βουλεύσασθαι περὶ τὰ αὑτῷ ἀγαθὰ καὶ συμφέροντα, οὐ κατὰ μέρος, οἷον ποῖα πρὸς ὑγίειαν, πρὸς ἰσχύν, ἀλλὰ ποῖα πρὸς τὸ εὖ ζῆν ὅλως. Translation by Rackham 1934.

[14] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.7, 1141a26–28, with commentary in Eustratios of Nicaea, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics 6*, 327.25–328.15; cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.2, 1139b5–11. On the ability to deliberate well as the principal characteristic of the prudent man, see also *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.7, 1141b8–14.

[15] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.8, 1142a11–16; cf. 6.11, 1143b11–14. On the importance of experience for prudence, see also Eustratios of Nicaea, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics 6*, 335.7–336.13, 344.1–15, 350.6–13.

[16] On the practical nature of prudence, see e.g. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.7, 1141b14–23; on prudence in relation to virtue and action in general, see *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.12–13, 1144a11–1145a14. On prudence and action, see also Eustratios of Nicaea, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics 6*, 335.7–336.13, with Trizio 2021, 195–96. The literature on *phronesis* in Aristotle is extensive. See e.g. Reeve 1992, 67–98 and 2013, Hursthouse 2006; for an overview, see also Celano 2016, 12–51, with further chapters on the reception of Aristotle's thought in the medieval West.

tion of Athena's first appearance on the Trojan battlefield in Book One of the *Iliad* illustrates.[17] The Greeks are gathered to discuss the pestilence that has been raging through their camp for nine days already. The seer Calchas reveals that the disease was sent by Apollo and will end if Agamemnon's concubine Chryseis is returned to her father Chryses, Apollo's priest. When Agamemnon thereupon announces that he will deprive Achilles of Briseis by way of compensation, Achilles is furious:

> Within his shaggy breast his heart was divided in counsel, whether he should draw his sharp sword from his side and break up the assembly, and kill the son of Atreus, or whether he should check his wrath and curb his spirit. While he pondered this in his mind and heart, and was drawing his great sword from its sheath, Athena came from heaven, sent by the goddess, white-armed Hera ...[18]

Athena approaches Achilles from behind, pulls him by the hair, and orders him to check his anger: he may reproach Agamemnon with words but should refrain from violent actions.[19]

Eustathios gives an elaborate allegorical interpretation of this scene, and of the figure of Athena in particular, which sets the stage for his reading of the goddess' subsequent appearances in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. He explains that we should not apprehend Athena as a goddess here but as Achilles' own readiness of mind (*anchinoia*).[20] Her descending from heaven (i.e. from Achilles' head) represents Achilles' reason (*logos*) descending into the future and reflecting on the severe consequences killing Agamemnon might have.[21]

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[17] In his funeral oration for his former teacher, Michael Choniates praises the efficiency and breadth of Eustathios' teaching, which included Aristotle (*Or.* 16, 286.29–30). On Eustathios' use of Aristotle and Aristotelian commentaries in his work on Homer, see Van der Valk 1971, CIII–CIV.

[18] *Iliad* 1.188–95, translation by Murray 1999.

[19] *Iliad* 1.197–214.

[20] Eustathios, *Commentary on the Iliad* (hereafter: *in Il.*) 81.26–27=1.128.35–36; 82.13–22=1.129.35–130.6. Cf. schol. D *ad Il.* 1.195 and Heraclitus, *Allegories* 20.1, where Athena is interpreted as Achilles' *phronesis*.

[21] Eustathios, *in Il.* 81.27–33=1.128.36–129.4. Athena is the *logistikos* or rational part of the mind that can counteract irrational impulses, as she does, for instance, by preventing Ares from intervening in the war against Zeus' orders in *Iliad* 15: see Eusta-

Agamemnon is a mighty king whereas Achilles rules only a minor kingdom; this is why refraining from killing Agamemnon is the better course of action for Achilles' own sake. Eustathios argues that attacking a powerful king can only end badly: should Achilles try to murder the king and fail, nothing good will come of it; should he manage to kill Agamemnon, he will bring disgrace upon himself and destruction upon the Greeks.[22] This emphasis on Agamemnon's royal authority and the dangers involved in disrespecting it is without parallel in Eustathios' sources and appears to reflect the autocratic imperial world in which he himself lived.[23] More relevant to this paper, however, is Athena's role as Achilles' own readiness of mind and, later in Eustathios' interpretation of this passage, his prudence.[24] In the sixth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle contrasts the speed of *anchinoia* to the excellent deliberation that defines *phronesis*. Like Aristotle, Eustathios draws a distinction between *anchinoia* and *phronesis*: the former involves a swift consideration of what is necessary, whereas the latter requires deliberation over a longer period of time.[25]

The idea that *phronesis* involves considering various courses of action and their outcomes has much in common with Aristotle's definition of the virtue, as does Eustathios' emphasis on the forethought involved in making a prudent decision. In Eustathios' view, the fact that Athena approaches Achilles from behind is connected to this reflection on the future that prudence involves: it symbolizes that the goddess allows the hero to understand the future for, according to the ancients, the future lies behind

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thios, *in Il.* 1008.58–60=3.710.26–29. On heaven representing the head, see also *in Il.* 82.2–8=1.129.22–29. Cf. Tzetzes, *Exegesis of the Iliad* ad 1.195, 1.222, 1.420; *Allegories of the Iliad* 1.82–92; *Allegories of the Odyssey* 1.227–29.

[22] Eustathios, *in Il.* 81.33–42=1.129.5–15. Eustathios suggests that this is also what Hera's involvement might point to: as the queen goddess, Hera represents the monarchy and royal life.

[23] On contemporary ideology in the Homeric commentaries, see also Cullhed 2017.

[24] E.g. Eustathios, *in Il.* 84.36=1.134.8 and 89.1–7=1.140.7–13 as quoted below.

[25] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.9, 1142b5–6, with Eustratios of Nicaea, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics 6,* 355.10–356.4; cf. *Posterior Analytics* 1.34, 89b10–20. Eustathios, *Commentary on the Odyssey* (hereafter: *in Od.*) 1742.62–1743.2=2.51.14–16. For Eustathios' definition of *anchinoia* (based on its etymology), see also *in Il.* 82.21–22=1.130.5–6, 821.50–52=3.122.18–20.

us as it is hidden from our view.[26] Eustathios' etymological interpretation of Athena's name further underlines the connection between forethought and prudence: "Athena" derives from the verb *athrein*, "to perceive", "as she is someone who is perceptive in that she is able to foresee the future and the things that are necessary".[27] Her epithet *glaukopis*, "with gleaming eyes", points in the same direction: Eustathios explains that the verb *glaussein* is a near synonym of *athrein*, which means that their derivatives, i.e. *glaukopis* and *Athene*, are likewise related. The owl is therefore sacred to Athena not only because it can see in the dark just as understanding (here *sunesis*) can penetrate the obscurity of the future, but also because *glaux* ("owl") is etymologically derived from *glaussein*.[28] Athena's epithet "Pallas", moreover, derives from the verb *pallein*, "to move", and hence refers to the swiftness involved in *phronesis* and *pronoia*.[29]

According to Eustathios, it is these virtues as represented by Athena that command Achilles to restrain his anger toward Agamemnon. When she appears, Achilles is amazed; he turns around and recognizes her at once (*Iliad* 1.199–200). In Eustathios' reading, Achilles' turning around symbolizes that it is impossible to defy correct reasoning. That he recognizes Athena immediately points to his *anchinoia*; it shows that he is aware that his line of reasoning was wrong, that he needs to draw better conclusions, and that

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[26] Unlike the present and the past, which lie before our eyes: *in Il.* 81.44–82.2=1.129.18–22. See also *in Il.* 82.18–20=1.130.2–5, 1141.61–63=4.172.1–5 on *anchinoia* as foresight. For the idea that the future lies behind us, see schol. bT on *Iliad* 18.250b.

[27] Eustathios, *in Il.* 83.33=1.132.14–15: [ἢ παρὰ τὸ ἀθρεῖν τὸ βλέπειν] ἀθρήνη τις οὖσα ὡς τῶν μελλόντων καὶ δεόντων προβλεπτική; cf. *in Il.* 86.42=1.137.9–10. For similar etymologies, see e.g. Heraclitus, *Allegories* 19.8; *Etymologicum Magnum* 24.44–47; Tzetzes, *Exegesis of the Iliad* ad 1.194 and *Commentary on Hesiod's Works and Days* ad 76, where the focus is more on clear perception and understanding than foresight.

[28] Eustathios, *in Il.* 86.35–87.1=1.137.1–16. For similar etymological explanations of *glaukopis* in relation to *phronesis*, see e.g. Tzetzes, *Commentary on Hesiod's Works and Days* ad 76. Cf. *Etymologicum Magnum* 233.10–13: an owl is called *glaux* from *glaussein* because it is sharp-sighted. Eustathios uses *phronesis* and *sunesis* synonymously and repeatedly interprets Athena as understanding. See e.g. *in Il.* 1006.9=3.702.31 and *in Od.* 1431.4 Cullhed.

[29] Eustathios, *in Il.* 84.35–37=1.134.7–9. For a similar etymology, see Tzetzes, *Commentary on Hesiod's Works and Days* ad 76.

prudence has now come to him.[30] Eustathios sums up his interpretation as follows:

> The poet clearly does not permit us to understand Athena here as a goddess but as conjectural *phronesis* of the future when he writes "one day three times as many glorious gifts will be yours on account of this insult. Restrain yourself, therefore, and obey us" (*Iliad* 1.213–14) [...] For Achilles does not hear these words from the mythical Athena but draws these conjectural conclusions of his own accord.[31]

Employing various hermeneutic strategies and building on various ancient traditions, Eustathios offers his own intricate reading of the goddess Athena in the opening book of his commentary. In this way, he is able not only to display exegetical ingenuity but also to bring Homer in line with deeper philosophical ideas, thereby making the *Iliad* a vehicle for moral education and its heroes models of *phronesis* with Aristotelian overtones. He turns Athena from a supernatural element in Homer's narrative into something innately human and creates heroes that rely on their own prudence to make the right decisions.[32]

5.2 MODELS OF MANHOOD: ATHENA AND HER PRUDENT HEROES

Throughout the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, Athena assists various Homeric heroes, most notably Achilles, Odysseus, and Diomedes in the *Iliad* and Odysseus and Telemachus throughout the *Odyssey*. In the first book of the *Od-*

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[30] Eustathios, *in Il.* 85.10–13=1.134.31–135.1. See also *in Od.* 1395.10–15 Cullhed: Athena's golden sandals in *Odyssey* 1.96–97 symbolize the radiance and swiftness of prudent thought. See Wissmann 2009, 437–38 for different interpretations of Athena's attributes in the ancient scholia. On correct reasoning, cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.9, 1142b15–33, where it is considered essential to the deliberative excellence that defines the prudent man.

[31] Eustathios, *in Il.* 89.1–7=1.140.7–13: Ὅτι φανερῶς ἐνταῦθα ὁ ποιητὴς τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν οὐ θεὰν ἀφίησι νοεῖν, ἀλλὰ φρόνησιν στοχαστικὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος ἐν τῷ «καί ποτέ τοι τρὶς τόσσα παρέσσεται ἀγλαὰ δῶρα [ὕβριος εἵνεκα τῆσδε· σὺ δ' ἴσχεο, πείθεο δ' ἡμῖν» [...] οὐκ ἐξ Ἀθηνᾶς γὰρ τῆς μυθικῆς ἀκούων, ἀλλ' οἴκοθεν ἐννοεῖται τοιαῦτα στοχαστικῶς ὁ Ἀχιλλεύς.

[32] For a similar disenchantment of Homeric goddesses in Malalas and Tzetzes, see Goldwyn, this volume.

yssey, Athena prompts Telemachus to travel to Sparta and Pylos in search of information about his father, and thus sets the entire plot of the poem in motion towards the killing of the suitors, which, in Eustathios' view, is the culmination of the narrative.[33] Eustathios' interpretation of this episode places a great deal of emphasis on action: Athena's approaching Telemachus (in the shape of Mentes) and instructing him on what to do indicates that the young man has matured and has gained natural *phronesis*, which, as we saw in Aristotle, comes with experience and age.[34] Eustathios explains that this Athena, his new-found *phronesis*, incites Telemachus to move from deliberation to *praxis* or action.[35] Her connection with action is further underscored by her attributes, and in particular by her spear, which, in Eustathios' reading, illustrates her activeness (*energon*), manliness (*androdes*), and effectuality (*drasterion*).[36] That Athena leaves Telemachus a little later on does not mean that he loses his prudence. Rather, it means that after due deliberation he has come to a decision and can stop pondering the issue, knowing that he has thought everything through and can proceed to doing what he has decided to do. Athena's departure merely signals the end of the deliberation process.[37]

We find a similar combination of *phronesis* and action in connection with other heroes, not least Athena's favourite Odysseus. When in the tenth book of the *Iliad* Diomedes volunteers to enter the Trojan camp in order to spy on the enemy, he asks Odysseus to accompany him because he considers him the most discerning of all the Greeks at Troy and because Athena loves him (*Iliad* 10.242–47). In his comments on this passage, Eustathios underscores

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[33] On the slaying of the suitors as the culmination of the *Odyssey,* see Eustathios, *in Od.* 1393.55–1394.2 Cullhed.

[34] Eustathios, *in Od.* 1393.42–50 Cullhed. On *phronesis,* experience, and old age, see also Eustathios, *in Il.* 240.19–20=1.365.29–31 and the example discussed on p. 129 below. Cf. Heraclitus, *Allegories* 61–63. On Athena and Telemachus in ancient exegesis, see Wissmann 2009; see also Murrin 2007.

[35] Eustathios, *in Od.* 1393.46, 1398.28–29 Cullhed.

[36] Eustathios, *in Od.* 1395.25–29 Cullhed.

[37] Eustathios*, in Od.* 1419.60–64 Cullhed. Athena as the *phronesis* of women is often related to deliberation as well as skills in weaving and other crafts: see e.g. Eustathios, *in Od*. 1436.23–25, 1437.44–49 on Penelope; cf. Tzetzes, *Commentary on Hesiod's Works and Day*s ad 64 (on the story of Pandora).

that Diomedes chooses Odysseus not because he is braver than all the rest but because he has more *phronesis*. Assuming that the world of heroes is as rife with competition as his own, Eustathios adds that there is no reason for the wise Nestor to be jealous now that Diomedes has awarded Odysseus first place in *phronesis*: Nestor knows that, at his age, his is a prudence stripped of action, while Odysseus' prudence is the active and practical *phronesis* that Athena represents.[38] Eustathios recognizes this as the heroic ideal formulated by Homer. In his view, Homer's depiction of the heroes shows that, ideally, manliness and valour in war should be accompanied by *phronesis*. Action should be guided by prudence. Eustathios, moreover, argues repeatedly that Homer in fact valued *phronesis* more than *andreia* and prefers courageous prudence over valorous actions per se.[39]

    This model of heroism resonates with ideas found in other Eustathian texts, not least in his panegyrical orations for Manuel I Komnenos, in which the emperor is often presented as a military hero.[40] In his 1174 Epiphany oration, for instance, Eustathios underscores Manuel's prudent courage by comparing his actions at the battle of Zeugminon years earlier to the impetuous actions of Alexander the Great at the Rock of Chorienes.[41] Unlike Alexander, Eustathios argues, Manuel did not climb the siege ladder recklessly, unnecessarily risking his own life. Rather, "my performer of great deeds and the greatest emperor both commanded as general and showed his manhood, and besieged that notable city alone, and did everything

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[38] Eustathios, *in Il.* 801.7–27=3.54.15–55.21. Cf. *in Il.* 196.1–22=1.300.7–14: Odysseus is not more *phronimos* than Nestor, but his *phronesis* is more practical and active. On Odysseus as *phronimos,* see also Eustratios of Nicaea, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics 6*, 392.31–393.1.

[39] See e.g. Eustathios, *in Il.* 473.23–27=1.748.22–27, 801.20–27=3.55.12–21, 1200.48–51=4.382.23–383.2. The literature on Homeric heroism is vast; see e.g. Horn 2014 with references to earlier bibliography. On the importance of *euboulia* as counterpart to courage in the *Iliad*, see Schofield 1986.

[40] On military ideology in Komnenian panegyrical oratory, see Magdalino 1993, 418–22, 448–49, 469; on Komnenian military ideology, see also Neville 2012, 89–103, 121–38. On the reception of Homeric epic in discussions of good rulership in antiquity and beyond, see the contributions in Klooster & Van den Berg 2018.

[41] Arrian, *Anabasis* 4.21.

with prudent courage".[42] Indeed, Eustathios continues, there was no danger involved in Manuel's actions at all, as the emperor acted according to a wise plan and climbed a siege ladder whose construction he had supervised himself.[43] Eustathios' emphasis on the prudence that prevents courage from becoming recklessness may well have parenetic overtones here: as Andrew Stone points out, in Kinnamos' account of the events, Manuel's actions at Zeugminon could easily have been considered as rash as Alexander's.[44]

Whether parenetic or not, prudence was one of the key virtues for which Manuel was praised in the panegyrical oratory of his reign.[45] In his funeral oration for the emperor, Eustathios formulates *phronesis* as the essential virtue for good governance, which Manuel possessed in abundance:

> And this single man divided his time generously between the wide parts of the empire in an energetic way, displaying the initiative of his courage [*andria*] and his burning intelligence [*sunesis*] in a manner resembling an ambidextrous man, as much in matters related to the rest of practical wisdom [*phronesis*] as in those requiring readiness of mind [*anchinoia*]. For while he exhibited thoughtfulness in great matters, deliberating at length, in the majority of cases his mind got close to the heart of the matter and he lost no time in grasping the situation, right to its very depths, not superficially like those who are quick to come to a decision but without ensuring its reliability and soundness. And while he could also claim extraordinary deeds of bravery [*andria*], far more numerous were his acts of prudence [*phronesis*], which, even if we considered them individually, we enjoy in great numbers.[46]

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[42] Eustathios, *1174 Epiphany Oration* 267.14–17: ἀλλ᾽ ὁ ἐμὸς μεγαλουργὸς καὶ μέγιστος βασιλεὺς καὶ στρατηγεῖ καὶ ἀνδρίζεται καὶ μόνος πολιορκεῖ τὴν σπουδαίαν ἐκείνην πόλιν καὶ πάντα μετὰ θάρσους ἔμφρονος· Translation by Stone 2013.

[43] Eustathios, *1174 Epiphany Oration* 267.17–23.

[44] Stone 2013, 26, n. 137; Kinnamos, *History* 241.6–242.2. On the parenetic value of imperial oratory, see also Angelov 2003.

[45] Magdalino 1993, 435, 488.

[46] Eustathios, *Funeral Oration for Manuel I Komnenos* 14: Καὶ ἄνθρωπος εἷς οὗτος τοῖς μεγάλοις οἰκουμενικοῖς ἑαυτὸν μεγαλοφυῶς ἐπεμέριζε τμήμασιν εἰς τὸ ἐνεργόν, προβαλλόμενος ὅσα καὶ χεῖρας ἀμφιδεξίους, τὸ τῆς ἀνδρίας δραστήριον, καὶ τὸ τῆς συνέσεως ἐμπύριον, ὅσον τε ἐν τῇ λοιπῇ φρονήσει, καὶ ὁπόσον εἰς ἀγχίνοιαν. Ἦν μὲν γὰρ καὶ σκεπτικῶς ἔχων ἐν τοῖς μεγίστοις, καὶ ἐφιστάνων διανοητικῶς· τὰ πλείω, δὲ ἄγχιστα τῇ νοήσει παρίστατο, καὶ ἀχρόνως οἷον τοῦ νοουμένου ἐδράττετο, καὶ τούτου, βαθύτατα, καὶ οὐχ᾽ ὡς ἐπιπολάζειν κατὰ τοὺς ταχεῖς μὲν φρονεῖν, οὔ τι δὲ καὶ ἀσφαλεῖς. καὶ ἦν μὲν

Like Homer's heroes, Manuel exhibits the right balance of bravery and *phronesis*, with *phronesis* taking precedence over bravery—indeed, earlier in the same oration, Eustathios awards Manuel first place in *phronesis*.[47] Moreover, we find here the same combination of *anchinoia* and *phronesis* that governed Achilles' actions in the first book of the *Iliad*: Manuel's readiness of mind allows him to swiftly penetrate to the core of the matters at hand, while he simultaneously excels in the longer process of deliberating that characterizes the prudent man. Even if Eustathios' image of Manuel here might be a portrait of an ideal ruler rather than a real emperor, the similarities between his reading of Homer and his ideas on good rulership as formulated in the funeral oration are evident.[48]

Eustathios' reading of Homer's heroes, grounded though it may be in ancient reflections on Homeric heroism, thus ties in with his ideas on contemporary rulership and excellent manhood more broadly. The emperor's combination of valour and prudence is in line with a general model of *theoria*-with-*praxis* that finds its expression in different contexts throughout Eustathios' oeuvre. We find an example in the profile of the ideal civic philosopher as expressed in the *Commentary on the Odyssey*, in which Eustathios reads Odysseus as such a perfect philosopher who combines theory and practice, philosophy and rhetoric. Strengthened by his philosophical steadfastness, Odysseus can resist the Sirens' allure and draw theoretical knowledge from their wisdom-providing song. He does, however, not stay in the realm of theoretical knowledge forever but moves on to *praxis* by sharing his knowledge with his companions, just as the civic philosopher is expected to use his philosophical wisdom for the benefit of the community. It is rhetoric, the rhetorical skills of the civic philosopher, that allows him to pursue this practical purpose and communicate his wisdom to

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αὐτῷ, λίαν καλὰ καὶ τὰ τῆς ἀνδρίας σεμνά· περιττότερα δέ γε τὰ τῆς φρονήσεως, ἧς καὶ καταμόνας, εἰς μυρίον πλῆθος ὠνάμεθα. Translation by Bourbouhakis, slightly modified.

[47] Eustathios, *Funeral Oration for Manuel I Komnenos* 12.

[48] On prudence and paraenesis in the funeral oration, see Bourbouhakis 2017, 67*–81*, 114–15, 121.

less educated souls.[49] It has been repeatedly argued that Eustathios presents Odysseus as an alter ego of himself,[50] an idea supported by resonances of this ideal elsewhere in the Eustathian corpus.

We find a striking echo of the ideal of the civic philosopher in Eustathios' definition of the good monk in his *Inquiry into Monastic Life*. In his view, a monk is "God's herald" (*theokerux*) and therefore needs to be educated: how would a wholly uneducated person be able to spread the good deeds of God? Drawing on the *Psalms*, Eustathios defines the ideal monk as someone who "understands [*suniesin*] all the works of God by, alone, fashioning his heart anew".[51] This centrality of understanding, Eustathios continues, demonstrates that monasticism is both theoretical and practical: being an intellectual virtue, *sunesis* implies *theoria*, while the expression "all the works" implies *praxis*, since the one who is active (*praktikos*) in virtue can be considered hard-working (*ergatikos*).[52] He argues that, even if practical virtue is a form of God-given knowledge, bestowed upon educated and uneducated alike, to gain understanding, the ideal monk should read or listen to Scripture at the bare minimum. Yet to achieve the pinnacle of the philosophical way of life that is monasticism, one needs education and an active life to illuminate the mind. In Eustathios' view, then, the contemplative and active life complement each other: to pursue one without the other is like being half blind.[53]

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[49] Eustathios, *in Od.* 1709.18–30=2.4.35–5.1. See Van den Berg 2022, 25–26 for further references. Cf. the ideal of the *politikos bios* as formulated by Psellos and discussed in Trizio 2022, 83–85; on rhetoric and philosophy in Psellos, see also Papaioannou 2012.

[50] See e.g. Cesaretti 1991, 215, 224–26, Pizzone 2016, 241, Lovato 2022, Van den Berg 2022, 26–27.

[51] Eustathios, *Inquiry into Monastic Life* 141.1–7; quotation from ll. 5–7: πλάσας […] καταμόνας τὴν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ συνίησιν εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ. Metzler identifies allusions to Ps. 32.15 and 27.5. The question of education is the topic of chapters 126–32, 141–47. On Eustathios' views on monastic education and their contexts, see Metzler 2006, 57–58 and the commentary on pp. 489–99, 508–19.

[52] Eustathios, *Inquiry into Monastic Life* 141.7–10.

[53] Eustathios, *Inquiry into Monastic Life* 141.10–142.16. On *theoria* and *praxis* in Eustathios' treatise and their place in the monastic tradition, see Metzler 2006, 187–88, 201–12. On the monk as philosopher, see also *Inquiry into Monastic Life* 131. Eustathios' discussion seems to be part of a wider twelfth-century debate on ideal monkhood. Eustratios of Nicaea, for instance, draws a sharp distinction between the truly

In Eustathios' definition, contemplation involves reading books, firstly those that record divine deeds and, secondly, pagan ones as well. He recommends that the good monk study a selection of pagan histories, maxims, and *apophthegmata*, supporting his suggested reading programme with the authority of the Church Fathers: these most holy men of the past drew from such ancient texts material for their own works, thereby using them as beehives for their own honey.[54] Conversely, the monastic communities of Eustathios' day neglect the study of pagan and Christian books alike: Eustathios narrates an anecdote about an abbot so ignorant that he even sold off books with the works of a theological author as important as Gregory of Nazianzos.[55] He stresses the practical use of the knowledge to be gained: how can one define doctrinal questions and settle doctrinal disputes without being familiar with the arguments of previous theologians? How will one speak of God's great deeds after having cut off one's own tongue and lips?[56] The monastics of his day, Eustathios complains, focus exclusively on prayer, church services, and their communal table, going so far as to actively oppose learning. Yet, in Eustathios' view, this is not the complete definition of monastic virtue. A good monk needs knowledge—both theological and otherwise—with which to benefit the greater community.[57] Echoing his definition of the civic philosopher, Eustathios thus stresses that the ideal

contemplative life of monks and civic happiness: see Trizio 2016, 199–223 and 2022, 86–87. In his *Funeral Oration for Anna Komnene* (281.4–14), George Tornikios similarly distinguishes between two types of philosophers: monastics, who preach in an unadorned style, and civic philosophers, who combine rhetoric and philosophy; see Trizio 2022, 85–86 for discussion. A more elaborate investigation of the twelfth-century debate on the ideal monk would help to further contextualize Eustathios' views but this lies beyond the scope of the present paper.

[54] Eustathios, *Inquiry into Monastic Life* 143.1–5. The image of the bees famously occurs in a similar context in the fourth chapter of *Address to Young Men on Reading Greek Literature* by Basil the Great.

[55] Eustathios, *Inquiry into Monastic Life* 144; cf. 128.

[56] Eustathios, *Inquiry into Monastic Life* 146.1–7.

[57] Eustathios, *Inquiry into Monastic Life* 146.9–16; cf. 154: contemporary monks feel no need to either read or do good deeds. On Eustathios' rejection of gratuitous asceticism, see e.g. Kazhdan & Franklin 1984, 168–71, Magdalino 1993, 483, Metzler 2006, 211–12. See also his *Oration on a Certain Thessalonian Stylite*, with discussion in Stratigopoulos 2017.

monk, the ideal monastic philosopher, should implement the fruits of the contemplative life in an active life for the wellbeing of Christian society at large. That is to say, the monk needs an action-oriented understanding that is not altogether different from the active prudence that Eustathios recognizes in the Homeric heroes.

5.3 FROM *PHRONESIS* TO *DEINOTES*: THE RHETOR'S PRUDENCE

Throughout his Homeric commentaries, Eustathios remains first of all a rhetorician, attentive not only to the ethical qualities of Homer's heroes but also to their rhetorical skills. Yet, as we have seen above, ethics and rhetoric often work in combination. The elderly Nestor provides a good example. While Odysseus may outdo Nestor in active *phronesis*, Nestor surpasses Odysseus in rhetorical excellence: Nestor is *the* Homeric rhetor, while Odysseus comes second. When Homer praises Nestor by saying that "from [his] lips the streams of words ran sweeter than honey" (*Iliad* 1.249), Eustathios explains that Homer here testifies to two things: Nestor's rhetorical prowess and his *phronesis*. From this passage, Eustathios suggests, Strabo may have derived his definition of rhetoric as "*phronesis* in words" (1.2.5).[58] He continues by ascribing Nestor's *phronesis* to the experience he accumulated in his lifetime, since "experience is the mother of *phronesis*".[59] The aged hero himself supports this idea with repeated stories about his earlier feats; among them is the famous battle of the Centaurs and Lapiths, which he refers to in the first book of the *Iliad* (182–535). In Eustathios' reading, the rhetor Nestor tells this story to emphasize that he possesses understanding based on experience, cleverly downplaying his courage in order to lend even more weight to his *sunesis* in a skilfully arranged speech meant to convince the Greek army to heed his words.[60]

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[58] Eustathios, *in Il.* 96.38–43=1.151.22–27. On Nestor as the best orator, see also *in Il.* 220.40–221.20=1.335.33–336.30, with discussion in Lovato 2018, 219–20; on Nestor as rhetor in Eustathios' commentaries, see Lovato 2017, 42–62, 64–70. On Nestor's *euboulia*, see also Roisman 2005.

[59] Eustathios, *in Il.* 96.43–45=1.151.27–30; quotation from 96.45=1.151.30: μήτηρ γὰρ φρονήσεως ἐμπειρία.

[60] Eustathios, *in Il.* 102.45–103.19=1.161.8–32.

Eustathios sees this close connection of *phronesis* and eloquence embodied in the goddess Athena. Let us return once again to Athena's role in the first book of the *Odyssey*. Parallel to his allegorical reading of the goddess as Telemachus' new-found *phronesis*, Eustathios offers a different interpretation. He explains that of all the possible scenarios that Homer could have chosen in order to steer the narrative towards the killing of the suitors,

> the poet, true to himself, chose something more marvellous and indeed more difficult; something that, if tended to with proper rhetorical method and made plausible in a sound way, could prove his excellence in words. Moreover, one must know that Athena here is the method of Homer's rhetorical excellence [*deinotes*], by which the poet contrives Athena's descent to Ithaca and the events there, as well as those concerning Hermes' visit to Calypso.[61]

In this reading, then, it is not Athena as anthropomorphic goddess nor Athena as Telemachus' *phronesis*, but rather Athena as the poet's own rhetorical skilfulness or *deinotes* that sets the plot of the *Odyssey* in motion. While *deinotes* denotes the highest rhetorical skill in both the ancient and Byzantine rhetorical traditions, in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* it is closely related to *phronesis*: *deinotes* is cleverness that can be either good or bad, yet when used towards a good purpose such cleverness may become true virtue, *phronesis*.[62] Blending these two traditions, Eustathios interprets Athena as Homer's *phronesis* and *deinotes*, as the personification of the poet's rhetorical skill. In his view, Homer himself anticipated such a reading by repeatedly giving Athena the epithet *deine* in the sense of "awe-inspiring". By connecting this meaning of the adjective *deinos* with the formidable nature of *phronesis* and rhetorical skill, Eustathios is able to bring his different

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[61] Eustathios, *in Od.* 1394.5–9 Cullhed: ἀλλ' ὁ ποιητής, οἷος αὐτός, τὸ τερατωδέστερον ἐπελέξατο καὶ ἀληθῶς δυσεξέργαστον καὶ ὅπερ εὐμεθόδως μελετηθὲν καὶ ἀσφαλῶς πιθανολογηθέν, ἔχοι ἂν ἐξελέγχειν τὴν ἐν λόγοις αὐτοῦ ἀρετήν. Ἔτι ἰστέον καὶ ὅτι Ἀθηνᾶ ἐνταῦθα καὶ ἡ κατὰ τὴν Ὁμηρικὴν δεινότητα μέθοδός ἐστι, καθ' ἣν ὁ ποιητὴς ἐπινοεῖται τήν τε τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς εἰς Ἰθάκην κάθοδον καὶ τὰ ἐπ' αὐτῇ καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὸν Ἑρμῆν ἐπὶ τῇ Καλυψοῖ. Translation by Cullhed 2016, slightly modified.

[62] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.12–13, 1144a23–b4; see also Hursthouse 2006, esp. p. 298. On the difference between *deinotes* and *phronesis*, see also Eustratios of Nicaea, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics 6*, 392.7–394.2, 395.24–396.7.

interpretations together and support them with the authority of the Poet himself. For Eustathios, Homer is not so much a divinely inspired poet but rather a poet who relies on his own rhetorical prowess to compose a narrative that enchants by means of excellent rhetorical techniques rather than supernatural goddesses.[63]

The passages discussed in this section mention various other deities connected with the art of speaking. When, in the first book of the *Odyssey*, Zeus sends Hermes to Calypso at Athena's request, Eustathios interprets the messenger god as reason or *logos*, both our natural *logos* and uttered *logos* more specifically, while Calypso represents the human body, the flesh to which Odysseus the philosopher was bound and which his reason now urges him to disregard.[64] When discussing the honey of Nestor's speech, moreover, Eustathios remarks that the tongue is like a beehive for the Muses, whom he elsewhere interprets as allegories of the knowledge existing in the intellect (= Zeus).[65] Both Hermes and the Muses are the offspring of Zeus qua *nous* or intellect, while the fact that both "Muse" and the name of Hermes' mother Maia etymologically derive from the verb *mo*, "to inquire", further demonstrates their kinship.[66] Eustathios underscores that, despite this close connection, the Muses and Hermes represent significantly different types of discourse on account of their gender. Eustathios' gendered interpretation is worth quoting more extensively:

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[63] For Athena as Homer's *deinotes* in Eustathios' commentaries, see Cullhed 2014, 70*– 71*, Van den Berg 2017, 137–39. The virtue of *phronesis* becomes connected to rhetorical *deinotes* in Sikeliotes' *Commentary on Hermogenes' On Types of Style* 62.29–63.4; see Roilos 2005, 144–45 for discussion. See Van den Berg 2022, 169–72 for a more elaborate discussion of the nexus Athena-*phronesis-deinotes* in Eustathios' commentary.

[64] Eustathios, *in Od.* 1389.41–51 Cullhed. On Hermes as *logos* in Eustathios' commentary, see also Van den Berg 2022, 172–74.

[65] Eustathios, *in Il.* 96.33=1.151.16 (τινος Μοῦσων σίμβλου). On the Muses as knowledge in Eustathios' *Commentary on the Iliad*, see Van den Berg 2022, 167–68 with references to examples and further bibliography.

[66] For the etymology, see Eustathios, *in Il.* 10.30–31=1.17.14–16. The etymology of Μοῦσα – μῶ is also found in *Etymologicum Magnum* 589.41–42; cf. Plato, *Cratylus* 406a: Μοῦσα derives from μῶσθαι ("to search").

Notice furthermore that active speech, the kind of speech one observes in the dignified and, so to speak, manly practical art [sc. rhetoric], is called 'Hermes' in accordance with its masculine utterance; this means that, just as a loud roar of the sea, figuratively, becomes masculine when it is called "masculine [i.e. mighty] sound of the sea" [Sophocles, *Philoctetes* 1455], so also excellent speech—that is to say, noble philosophy escaping its female voice—is 'Hermaic' in its utterance. Zeus/the intellect in fact even uses this Hermes as a messenger and like an assistant. The kind of speech, however, that is not such, but is clad in women's clothes, as it were, with its predominant striving for elegance, pleasure, brilliance, and beauty, this type [of speech] is represented by the Muse Calliope or by the Muses in general; they are spoken of as being of the female sex and they were born from Zeus as well, but they most of all care for the song-loving Apollo [...] and thus, they demonstrate through themselves how they differ from Hermes.[67]

This passage ties in with various points of our discussion of Athena and prudence above. The type of discourse that Hermes—*logos*—involves, is masculine, active, and practical, not unlike the prudence that characterizes our Homeric heroes. Moreover, it consists of the same combination of philosophy and rhetoric that characterizes the civic philosopher, of philosophy cast in the manly language of rhetoric rather than the feminine elegance of the Muses. Eustathios' reading emphasizes that even if this feminine type of discourse is also born from the intellect, it might not have much to do with the *nous* after all: the Muses prefer to associate with the melodious Apollo rather than with their father, the supreme god himself. Even if Eustathios' intricate interpretation cannot be further unpacked here, it is clear that mas-

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[67] Eustathios, *in Il.* 10.20–30=1.17.3–14: Ἔτι σημείωσαι καὶ ὅτι ὁ μὲν δραστήριος λόγος ὁ κατὰ τὴν πρακτικὴν τὴν ἐμβριθῆ καὶ οἷον εἰπεῖν ἀνδρώδη θεωρούμενος Ἑρμῆς λέγεται κατὰ προφορὰν ἀρρενικήν, [ἵνα ὥσπερ ἰαχὴ πόντου μεγάλη τροπικῶς ἀρρενοῦται, λεγομένη «κτύπος ἄρσην πόντου», οὕτω καὶ λόγος γενναῖος, ταὐτὸν δ᾽ εἰπεῖν εὐγενὴς φιλοσοφία φεύγουσα τὸ θηλύφωνον, ἑρμαΐζεται τῇ προφορᾷ.] ᾧ δὴ Ἑρμῇ καὶ χρᾶται ἀγγέλῳ Ζεὺς ὁ νοῦς καὶ ὥσπερ ὑποδρηστῆρι. ὅσον μέντοι τοῦ λόγου μὴ τοιοῦτον, ἀλλ᾽ οἷον θηλύστολον, τῷ στοχάζεσθαι ὡραϊσμοῦ τὰ πλείω καὶ ἡδονῆς καὶ φαιδρότητος καὶ κάλλους, Καλλιόπη Μοῦσα ἢ ὅλως Μοῦσαι τὸ τοιοῦτον εἶδος, θηλυγενῶς ἐκφωνούμεναι καὶ Διὸς μὲν οὖσαι καὶ αὐταί, τῷ φιλῳδῷ δὲ Ἀπόλλωνι μάλιστα μέλουσαι [...] καὶ οὕτως αὐταῖς ὑπεμφαίνουσαι τὸ πρὸς τὸν Ἑρμῆν διάφορον, [οὗ τὸ συγγενὲς πρὸς τὰς Μούσας καὶ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ Μαῖα δηλοῖ. Μοῦσά τε γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ μῶ, τὸ ζητῶ, γίνεται καὶ Μαῖα ὡσαύτως.]

culinity is connected with action and practice, with rhetorically formulating ideas of philosophical depth, with the *logos* of Hermes and the *phronesis* of Athena, both offspring of and servants to the human intellect.

5.4 CONCLUSION

When Choniates writes that the drunk Constantinopolitan mob crushed their own *phronesis* and *andreia* by shattering Athena's statue on the eve of the city's capture, he presents them as anti-heroes who lacked the active prudence and prudent courage of an Odysseus or an Achilles. Not unlike Choniates, Eustathios sees these qualities as still relevant to contemporary heroes both on and off the battlefield. His reading of Athena as discussed in this paper demonstrates how he brings Homer's heroes in line with his own views on ideal manhood and good governance as he expresses them in different contexts elsewhere. Athena's favourite heroes, the civic philosopher Odysseus, the good ruler as exemplified by Manuel I Komnenos, and the ideal monk are all defined by a combination of contemplation and action that, although in different forms, revolves around deeds governed by intelligence, most often for the benefit of the community. Eustathios gives the prudence embodied by Athena Aristotelian overtones in line with the popularity of the *Nicomachean Ethics* in the twelfth century; with the same Aristotelian connection, he brings Athena's prudence into the field of rhetoric, his own profession, and makes the *deinotes* of the rhetor a veritable virtue. The issues discussed here are only a small part of how Eustathios turns Homeric poetry into a vehicle for moral reflection and redefines the cultural authority of Homer in terms relevant to his own day. Reading Eustathios' scholarship in dialogue with his oeuvre at large adds depth to his Homeric exegesis while simultaneously allowing us to see how the enchanting stories about the gods remained relevant—and indeed acquired new meaning—in Komnenian society.

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6

The Sexual Politics of Myth

Rewriting and Unwriting Women in Byzantine Accounts of the Trojan War

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S BOOK 5 of the *Odyssey* opens, the messenger god Hermes departs from Olympus and arrives at the abode of the goddess Calypso on the island of Ogygia, an island so splendid that "there even an immortal, who chanced to come, might gaze and marvel, and delight his soul".[1] The two continue on to find the great hero Odysseus, and in one of the most anticipated moments of literature of any period, we finally see this famed character about whom we have heard so much and seen so little over the course of the first four books. When at last Hermes arrives at the cave where he expects to find Odysseus, the Ithacan is not there, "for he sat weeping on the shore, as his wont had been, racking his soul with tears and groans and griefs, and he would look over the unresting sea, shedding tears."[2] Later, the power dynamic is made more clear; when Calypso tells Odysseus he can leave, he says he will not believe her until she promises not to plot against him or bring him to harm, something that is only necessary because she holds the power of life or death over him, whether he is stranded on her island or on the sea far away.[3] The contrast between the divine woman and the mortal man is clear; she is powerful, lives in a beautiful paradise; he is powerless, sitting on the shore in tears, far away from a home

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[1] Homer, *Odyssey* 5.73–74: ἔνθα κ᾽ ἔπειτα καὶ ἀθάνατός περ ἐπελθὼν / θηήσαιτο ἰδὼν καὶ τερφθείη φρεσὶν ᾗσιν.

[2] Homer, *Odyssey* 5.82–84: ἀλλ᾽ ὅ γ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀκτῆς κλαῖε καθήμενος, ἔνθα πάρος περ, / δάκρυσι καὶ στοναχῇσι καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἐρέχθων. / πόντον ἐπ᾽ ἀτρύγετον δερκέσκετο δάκρυα λείβων.

[3] Homer, *Odyssey* 5.171–91.

that he alone, of all the surviving Achaeans, is unable to reach. This opening glimpse of the hero demonstrates the inversion of the typical gendered power dynamic in the ancient societies in which the Homeric poems were created and heard. Indeed, in her introduction to the *Odyssey*, Emily Wilson suggests that "the relationships of Odysseus with Calypso, Circe, and especially Athena give us glimpses of an alternative to the 'normal' mortal world, in which female characters are always less powerful than their male partners."[4] Wilson thus proposes that the storyworld of the *Odyssey* is at odds with the values of the patriarchal society in which it was produced and of the androcentrism of the subsequent societies in which its reception was formed. One of the defining elements of reception studies is the process of aligning texts created under different ideological valences into the overarching ideological and cultural frameworks of the reception culture, and, given the empowerment of women in the *Odyssey* and the disempowerment of women in the cultures into which it was received, it is no surprise that the domestication of the women of the *Odyssey* is a central element of the text's reception history.[5]

In Byzantium, the reception history of the Homer epics was no exception; Homer was at once among the central texts of the Byzantine education system and of Byzantine identity, yet was also culturally distant in ways that made it difficult for Byzantines to understand both linguistically and ideologically. Thus, alongside the domestication of the foreign and pagan elements of the texts' reception was a tradition of relatively values-neutral interpretive work.[6] For instance, Eustathios of Thessaloniki, one of the greatest Homeric exegetes of the twelfth-century, makes frequent mention in his *Parekbolai* (a collection of notes and commentary) on the *Iliad* and

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[4] Wilson 2018, 37.

[5] Lorna Hardwick, for instance, argues in a general way that "the history of reception of ancient texts and ideas is to some extent shaped by the artistic forms and cultural politics of receiving traditions" (2003, 32). For allegory as a means to "domesticate the subversive aspects of [Homer's] poems" in seventeenth-century England, see Wolfe 2015, 492.

[6] The bibliography on the reception of Homer is extensive; for Homer and the Byzantine educational system, see Van den Berg 2022; for the reception of Homer in Byzantine literature, see Nilsson 2004, for the reception of Homer in the romance tradition, see Goldwyn and Nilsson 2019a.

the *Odyssey* of the strange customs a reader might encounter in the Homeric epics, explaining them in terms comprehensible to a Byzantine audience. For example, at *Od.*1.31–32, the Achaeans call a council, and Eustathios explains that "the reason for a common assembly is either that one wishes to clearly deliver some sort of news to the citizens […] or that one wishes to declare some other public matter".[7] The explanation is necessary, since members of the Byzantine imperial court would not be familiar with the political practices of the ancient Greeks; Eric Cullhed notes that "the normal system of many *basileis* ruling over different parts of the Greek-speaking world was fundamentally different from the Imperial system of the Byzantines with its one single emperor (*basileus*)."[8] The Homeric epics were the central pedagogical texts in Byzantium, and thus, the purpose of the *Parekbolai* was to explain these unknown aspects to the aristocratic students who would form the future ruling class of the empire.

Indeed, Eustathios' glosses could be as simple as clarifying at the level of diction, as for instance, when Eustathios explicates a particular expression from *Od.*2.35, in which "Telemachus was delighted at this *phēmē*".[9] Eustathios then glosses this particular word, the specific context of which or its meaning may be unknown to his audience: "A *phēmē* is a speech that indicates a future event, stated spontaneously".[10] There is little ideological valence to such a gloss; it functions to explain an unfamiliar word and to train aspiring prose writers in effective style.[11] However, the very need for such a lexical gloss indicates that the language of the Homeric epics was not comprehensible to Byzantines reading it. In this sense, the *Parekbolai* and

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[7] Eustathios, *Parekbolai β* 31–32 (Cullhed 2016, 352): Ὅτι αἰτία κοινῆς ἀγορᾶς ἤ τὸ ἀγγελίαν τινὰ ἐθέλειν σάφα εἰπεῖν τοῖς πολίταις […] ἤ τὸ ἐθελῆσαι δήμιόν τι ἄλλο πιφαύσκεσθαι.

[8] Cullhed 2018, 294.

[9] As cited in Eustathios, *Parekbolai β* 32: χαῖρε δὲ φήμῃ Ὀδυσσῆος φίλος υἱός.

[10] Eustathios, *Parekbolai β* 33–37: ἔστι δὲ φήμη λόγος δηλωτικὸς μέλλοντός τινος ἐξ αὐτομάτου λαλούμενος.

[11] For the varied (re)uses of Homer for Byzantine rhetoric, see Van den Berg 2021, according to whom "the linguistically and culturally competent student was expected to be familiar with the grammatical, rhetorical, and exegetical traditions connected with the poems as well as with a great deal of other ancient lore, whether literary, historical, mythological, or otherwise" (119).

other works in the scholarly and exegetical traditions are as much forms of translation as works in a more narrative vein. As the translator of modern Greek Karen Emmerich has noted, translations are not "like a freight train carrying a cargo of meaning to be unloaded on the far side of some clearly demarcated border."[12] Rather, "translations require a complex set of interpretive decisions that are conditioned by the particular context in which a translator (or translators) is working. […] The[translator] decide[s] what a work means (to them), how it means (to them), and which of its features (diction, syntax, linguistic register, rhythm, sound patterning, visual or material aspects, typographic form, and so on) are most important for the particular embodied interpretation they hope to share with others. They also decide how to account for those features in the new text they are writing."[13] That is to say, translation is as much a cultural process as a linguistic one. While not conceding that Eustathios' *Parekbolai* had no political valence,[14] texts that 'translated' (however loosely we care to define that word) the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* from ancient Greek to medieval Greek offer far more radical and subtle reinterpretations of the Homeric world. Eustathios and the other scholars who served as intermediaries between the Homeric texts and their future ruling-class students thus went to great lengths to ensure that the difficult ideological moments encoded in the texts were reinterpreted in ways that did not challenge, but rather supported, the Roman, Christian, aristocratic environment in which they were taught.[15]

One of the defining elements of the reception of the poems, therefore, has been the undermining of those aspects of the Homeric world they depict that clash with the values of the Byzantine world into which they were received. This operated at a cultural level, to make a cultural authority as great as Homer more than a poet of frivolous tales by giving the epics a

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[12] Emmerich 2017, 4.

[13] Emmerich 2017, 4.

[14] For Eustathios' interpretation of the Homeric texts in the *Parekbolai* as a way to anchor Byzantine identity in the ancient past in light of the rise of the Crusader states in former Byzantine territories, see Cullhed 2017, 296.

[15] By Roman, I mean those elements of the text that supported Byzantines as being intrinsically distinct from their neighboring contemporary cultures, such as described in Cullhed 2017. For Eustathios and Tzetzes as intermediaries, so Van den Berg 2020.

meaning deeper than simply stories of men at war. For Homer's Byzantine readers like Eustathios and his contemporary John Tzetzes, the mythical elements were fictional, and thus could be explained away through allegory as a means to get at the truth.

One result of this allegorical process was the domestication of the numerous mythological women in the epics who have power, agency, and are, to a degree, sexually liberated. If the relationships between Odysseus and the divine women of the *Odyssey* provide an "alternative to the 'normal' world," then two genres in the tradition of the reception of Homer in Byzantium, allegory and historiography, represent two modes by which Byzantines domesticated the ideologically dangerous parts of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. As Richard Hunter notes in his study of the ancient reception of Homer, "any attempt, however, to survey the ancient, even just the Greek, reception of Homer is bound to end up as just that, namely 'a survey,' and the material is so rich that it would be a very long survey indeed."[16] The same is true for the reception of Homer in any period, and Byzantium, with its long history and multifaceted reception culture, is no exception.

The overarching pattern of this diminution of women's experiences in Byzantine interpretations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, however, can be seen in two representative examples: the chronicle of John Malalas, a sixth-century historian who traced the history of the world from the biblical story of creation to his own lifetime (with the narrative of the Trojan War comprising most of the fifth book), and the *Allegories of the Iliad* and *Allegories of the Odyssey* by the twelfth-century grammarian and Homeric scholar John Tzetzes. Though the methods each employed were different, both had a similar goal of offering rational, explicable, and culturally legible means of transmitting a narrative full of gods and monsters to a Byzantine audience.[17] Despite their differences in genre, however, the end result of these ideological revisions had similar consequences for the Byzantine understanding of the depiction of gender in the poems: a sustained diminution of the powerful women of the *Odyssey* through disenchantment, by divesting them of the magical and divine abilities with which they were imbued in Homeric

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[16] Hunter 2018, vii.
[17] For the allegorical elements in Malalas' text, see Goldwyn 2015b.

myth. This was done in two ways, first, through rewriting—changing or re-interpreting the depiction or characterization of female characters to reduce their power and agency—and, second, through unwriting—narratological strategies that use summary or omission to write women out of the narratives altogether.

6.1 JOHN MALALAS AND THE UNWRITING OF WOMEN IN BYZANTINE HISTORIOGRAPHY

I have elsewhere argued that "reading Malalas' *Chronicle* as the product of a self-conscious writer of literature manipulating the traditional structure of the chronicle in new way" can allow readers of his work to move away from older hermeneutic models in which, as Jenny Ferber suggested in 1978, "the task of chronography [is] one of pure compilation"[18] and pointed to a growing trend of scholarship that rejects the idea that Malalas and other chroniclers "were to be seen as nothing more than illiterate and/or ignorant compilers complying with popular taste."[19] Instead, I argue that approaching the text from a narratological perspective "opens up new possibilities for appreciating the artistry of its composition and the innovative variety of its rhetorical devices."[20] While my focus in that piece was mostly devoted to what is gained by reading Malalas as a literary artist, an "author-compiler" in his own right,[21] it is as important to recognize what is lost from Homer's version in Malalas' account of the Trojan War.

For instance, Homer's treatment of Odysseus' stay on Calypso's island is markedly different from that same scene as narrated by Malalas. Whereas Homer's account of Odysseus' visit to Calypso comprises most of Book 5, Malalas' account is very brief: "On departing from Circe's island, Odysseus, driven by contrary winds, went on to the next island, where Calypso, Circe's sister, received him. She honoured him with many attentions and lived

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[18] Goldwyn 2022, 58. The citation is from Ferber 1978, 32, drawing on a long debate about the literariness or lack thereof in "monk's chronicles."

[19] Tocci 2014, 61

[20] Goldwyn 2022, 58.

[21] See Tocci 2014, 64, where he argues that "the emphasis should fall on the term *author* rather than on its counterpart *compiler.*"

with him in marriage. From there he continued on."[22] This example offers a clear case of the narrative technique of unwriting. One of the fundamental principles of narratology is that what an author does (or does not) narrate corresponds to how important (or unimportant) that element is. Narratologists calls this "rhythm," and it has been a central concern of Homeric narratology in particular;[23] elsewhere, I have explained the basic principle of narratology as that

> in real life, time moves at a static pace and everything, whether boring or exciting, important or insignificant, takes the same amount of time. In a literary representation of those events, however, the author can choose which events to include or exclude, which events to foreground or background, and which events to describe at great length and which to pass over quickly; how much narrative time (with how much text is devoted to a certain moment often used as a proxy) is determined by the author to emphasize or diminish certain events. That is, authors can slow down or even pause time through more detailed description, can narrate such that time moves (roughly) at the pace of real life (such as direct reported speech), or can speed up time through elision or omission.[24]

Classical narratology[25] began as a structuralist mode of investigation, analyzing the construction of narrative in ways that asserted a kind of universality of storytelling praxis that was, in the words of Roland Barthes, "international, transhistorical, transcultural,"[26] or, in the words of Gerald Prince, "not so much concerned with the history of particular novels or tales, or with their meaning, or with their esthetic values."[27] Post-classical narratologists,

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[22] Malalas, *Chronicle* 5.51: Ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς νήσου τῆς Κίρκης ἐξορμήσας ὁ Ὀδυσσεὺς ἀνήχθη εἰς τὴν ἄλλην νῆσον, ὑπὸ ἀνέμων ἐναντίων ἐκριφείς· ὅντινα ἐδέξατο καὶ ἡ Καλυψώ, ἡ ἀδελφὴ τῆς Κίρκης, καὶ πολλῆς θεραπείας ἠξίωσεν αὐτόν, συμμιγεῖσα αὐτῷ καὶ πρὸς γάμον. κἀκεῖθεν ἀνήχθη. I have regularized the translation of names from, e.g. Kirke to Circe and Kalypso to Calypso.

[23] See, for instance, de Jong 2001, xvi–xvii or de Jong and Nünlist 2007, xiii.

[24] Goldwyn 2021, 74.

[25] 'Classical' narratology as opposed to more recent 'post-classical narratology', not 'Classical' in the sense of the ancient Greek and Roman disciplinary archive.

[26] Barthes 1977, 79, as quoted in Page 2006, 2.

[27] Prince 2012, 5, as quoted in Page 2006, 3.

have argued that these universalizing systems obscure differences based on the positionality of narrators and that, indeed, narratology can shed light on, for instance, the depiction of gender in a text. Tory Young characterizes these "early objections to the idea of a feminist narratology [...] as a kind of contamination of the neutral descriptive system of classical narratology by ideologically motivated analysis."[28] Post-classical narratology, however, rejects the notion that this is a form of contamination, instead presupposing "that the assumption of universalism was not neutral, but founded on an androcentric bias."[29] From the perspective of a feminist (or broadly post-classical) narratology, these narrative decisions are not values-neutral, but instead represent the same array of ideological positions as other elements of texts that are widely accepted as conveyers of meaning (characterization, theme, genre). Young, for instance, critiques what she calls Prince's "call for narratologists to resist 'the interpretive temptation,'" instead asserting that "it no longer seems possible to regard narratology as a neutral linguistic science."[30] In this regard, post-classical narratology can be seen as a complement to the poststructuralist turn in general, with its attunement to issues of race, class, gender, ability, and other elements of subject positionality. Indeed, a vast body of feminist narratology has fundamentally altered the way in which gender is constructed; moving away from what the feminist narratologist Ruth Page calls the "narrow" view of structuralists like Barthes and Prince,[31] post-classical narratologists see an analysis of the construction of narrative as a way of elucidating the insights drawn from critical theory. Thus, Page argues that "feminist narratology is not then a separate set of feminist narrative models, but is better understood as the feminist *critique* of narrative theory."[32] Within a specifically Byzantine context, Matthew Kinloch summarizes this important as "Past women [...] exist continuously for a period of time, but female characters exist only momentarily, dropping in and out of existence as they are narrated (or not) in a story."[33]

[28] Young 2021, 2.
[29] Page 2006, 4.
[30] Young 2021, 2, citing Prince 1995, 82; also discussed in Page 2006, 48.
[31] For which, see Page 2006, 3, 4, 5, 13.
[32] Page 2006, 5.
[33] Kinloch 2020, 307.

Thus, a narratologist might look at Malalas' treatment of Calypso and ask what narratological strategies he employed to narrate this scene; a feminist narratology, however, would ask not just that we analyze what narrative decisions Malalas makes, but how these decisions shape the depiction of gender within the narrative. And, indeed, Malalas' omission of much of Homer's source material in his retelling of this episode represents a significant diminishment of one of the most powerful female figures in the text: Calypso's island is no longer a sight that inspires awe and wonder. From the perspective of a gendered power dynamic, Malalas' Calypso is never put in a position of power and dominance over Odysseus, and Odysseus is never reduced to a destitute refugee crying on the seashore. In making a narratological decision about how much space to give the episode of Odysseus' stay on Calypso's island (indeed, by narrating Calypso's life only insofar as it intersects with Odysseus'), Malalas is making decisions that have direct bearing on the depiction of powerful women, about what elements of a woman's life are or are not worth narrating.

In a Byzantine context, one of the major ways in which the Homeric epics were at odds with the worldview of the Byzantines was in their treatment of the divine; as Orthodox Christians, the Byzantines could not accept the enchanted elements of the pagan epics, so their revisions focused on removing the divine elements. Malalas' reception of the *Odyssey*, therefore, is defined by its rationalization of the text, that is, the removal of the divine, the pagan, the supernatural, the enchanted, but these imaginary alter-realities were also the only ones in which women could have power over men, and so rendering the story in more 'realistic' terms necessarily also rewrites the women of the *Odyssey* into gender roles more comprehensible to a Byzantine audience, ones in which they have no power.

The diminution of women's power through rationalizing or realistic historiographical narrative continues with the rest of Odysseus' journey as well: "From there he continued on to where there was a great lake, known as Nekyopompos".[34] Nekyopompos literally means "guide" (-πομπος) "of the dead" (Νεκυό-), which is Malalas' way of rationalizing the pagan underworld

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[34] Malalas, *Chronicle* 5.51: κἀκεῖθεν ἀνήχθη, ἔνθα λίμνη ὑπῆρχε μεγάλη πλησίον τῆς θαλάσσης, λεγομένη ἡ Νεκυόπομπος.

Odysseus visits, another rationalizing element that effaces those elements of the text that are antithetical to the Christian worldview. Malalas continues: "When he left there a great storm took place and he was cast up from the sea on to the rocks known as the Serenidai, which produce a distinctive sound from the crashing waves".[35] Here, too, we can see the way in which unwriting operates at the intersection of narratology and gendered power dynamics. Just as Malalas' revision of Odysseus' experiences on Ogygia removed from the narrative a powerful and potentially dangerous divine female character, his description of the Sirens has a similar result. No longer women whose singing was both beautiful and dangerous, but a phenomenon entirely explicable through rational observation: instead of monsters, rocks; instead of singing, the sound of waves. Thus, in proposing a rational or natural cause for an un-Christian enchanted element of the text, Malalas also eliminates the possibility of dangerous sexually beguiling women.

This unwriting can be seen in the remaining narrative of Odysseus' journey home as well:

> When he escaped from these [the Serenidai] he came to the place known as Charybdis, which is a wild precipitous region. There he lost all his remaining ships and his army, while he himself was left floating in the sea, on a plank from his ship, expecting a violent death. But some Phoenician sailors, however, were sailing by, saw him swimming in the water, and took pity on him. They rescued him and took him to the island of Crete, to Idomeneus, exarch of the Greeks.[36]

In this summary version of Odysseus' *nostos*, many of the most powerful women in the Homeric epic are written out entirely or degendered through rationalizing historiography. First, Charybdis is transformed from a female

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[35] Malalas, *Chronicle* 5.51: καὶ ἀναχθεὶς ἐκεῖθεν χειμῶνος μεγάλου γενομένου θαλάσσης ἐκρίπτεται εἰς τὰς Σερενίδας οὕτω καλουμένας πέτρας, αἳ ἐκ τῶν κρουσμάτων τῶν κυμάτων ἦχος ἀποτελοῦσιν ἴδιον.

[36] Malalas, *Chronicle* 5.51: κἀκεῖθεν ἐξειλήσας ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν καλουμένην Χάρυβδιν, εἰς τόπους ἀγρίους καὶ ἀποτόμους· κἀκεῖ πάσας τὰς ὑπολειφθείσας αὐτῷ ναῦς καὶ τὸν στρατὸν ἀπώλεσεν, αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Ὀδυσσεὺς μόνος ἐν σανίδι τοῦ πλοίου ἐν τῷ πελάγει ἐφέρετο, ἀναμένων τὸν μετὰ βίας θάνατον. τοῦτον δὲ ἑωρακότες τινὲς ἀποπλέοντες ναῦται Φοίνικες νηχόμενον ἐν τοῖς ὕδασιν ἐλεήσαντες διέσωσαν, καὶ ἤγαγον αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ Κρήτῃ νήσῳ πρὸς τὸν Ἰδομενέα, ἔξαρχον Ἑλλήνων.

sea-monster whose gulping creates a giant whirlpool that threatens to suck Odysseus and his ships into its maw into a toponym for a dangerous piece of land, while Scylla, the female sea-monster who in the *Odyssey* eats six of Odysseus' crew, is omitted entirely. In order to avoid the problem of Ino's magic veil, Malalas has Odysseus saved by Phoenician sailors, but in doing so, he also erases the powerful female nymph from his history; similarly, Odysseus is not taken to Phaiakia, which would have posed problems not just of immortal gardens always in bloom, but of female authority in the figure of Queen Arete, and so instead he is taken to Crete, and Idomeneus, a king.

In that Malalas was writing the entirety of world history as he understood it and that the return of one general of one war back to his home island is, in the grand scheme of world history, a small and fairly inconsequential event, we cannot blame Malalas for narrating these events in much less detail than Homer, for whom it was the organizing principle of an epic poem that covers only 42 days. Malalas, moreover, was himself working within a broader rationalizing tradition that limited his narrative options. Indeed, Malalas' narrative of the Trojan War is largely drawn from the work of two authors of the Second Sophistic, Dares the Phrygian and Dictys of Crete.[37] For the Byzantines writ large, Dares and Dictys were neither frequently read nor of particular interest as primary sources. Their importance was in their appropriation by select Byzantine authors, particularly Malalas, whose chronicle was highly influential, and thus indirectly spread Dares and Dictys into Byzantine ideas about the past. Their true import, particularly as regards their narrative of the Trojan War, however, was not in the events they told, but in the way they told them.[38] By the early first or second century CE when these authors were writing, historiography had long-since shifted away from the kind of poetry that Homer had composed; medieval authors excised what Dares' and Dictys' modern English translator Richard Frazer calls "the divine machinery typical of ancient epic," and replaces Homer's narratologically-sophisticated treatment of time in the text (analepsis, prolepsis) and

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[37] For which, see Goldwyn 2016.

[38] Their influence was more widely felt in medieval western Europe, which had lost access entirely to the ancient Greek sources of the Trojan War and Homer in particular, for which, see Clark 2020, especially the first half, which covers the ancient and medieval reception of Dares.

his abbreviated time-frame (e.g. his narration of the ninth year of the war) with a day-by-day year-by-year chronological treatment of the Trojan War.[39] But, as I have argued elsewhere, "Malalas was not an uncritical copier of Dictys' *Journal*; rather, the skeletal frame of the earlier work became the literary superstructure onto which Malalas layered his own literary, aesthetic and ideological concerns."[40] He had, moreover, at least the claim to access to Homer, referencing the poet numerous times.[41] For Malalas, however, his references to Homer are often qualified: "the poet Homer tells this story poetically", he says, for instance, in discussing the adultery of Aphrodite and Ares,[42] where "poetically," as elsewhere in Malalas, is code for "lying" or "fictional."[43] Indeed, Malalas elsewhere notes that "the most learned Homer related poetically that through a magic potion she transformed the men who had been ensnared by her" by turning them into animals,[44] but he then follows the euhemeristic tradition of the Homeric scholar Phaidalos of Corinth in interpreting this allegorically: "the poet was referring to the habits of men in love."[45] Malalas, then, whether he had direct access to Homer or not, had access to a variety of mythological elements from the poems; his Circe, like his Calypso, could have been the "dread goddess" (δεινὴ θεός/ deinē theós) of Homer,[46] but he chose not to draw from the mythological elements that would characterize her as a powerful sovereign woman.

As with any summary, Malalas had to make decisions about what to include and what to exclude, and how to render those events in terms that would be comprehensible to his audience of sixth-century Byzantines. An-

[39] Frazer 1966, 6.

[40] Goldwyn 2015, 25.

[41] For an assessment of Malalas' claims to have used extensive sources, and the way in which he incorporated both those had had read and those he claimed to have read but had not, see Jeffreys 1990

[42] Malalas, *Chronicle* 2.2: περὶ οὗ ἱστορεῖ ποιητικῶς Ὅμηρος ὁ ποιητής.

[43] Malalas, *Chronicle* 2.2: ἱστορεῖ ποιητικῶς Ὅμηρος ὁ ποιητής. For which, see Goldwyn 2022.

[44] Malalas, *Chronicle* 5.50: ἀλλὰ ὁ δὲ σοφώτατος Ὅμηρος ποιητικῶς ἔφρασεν, ὅτι διὰ πόματος μαγικοῦ τοὺς συλλαμβανομένους πρὸς αὐτὴν ἄνδρας μετεμόρφου. τρόπον σημαίνων ὁ ποιητὴς τῶν ἀντερώντων ἀνδρῶν.

[45] Malalas, *Chronicle* 5.50: ὁ ποιητὴς τῶν ἀντερώντων ἀνδρῶν.

[46] E.g. Homer, *Odyssey* 11.8.

alyzing his principles of selection—what episodes to include or exclude—and the rationalizing processes by which he did so, however, reveals that in making these decisions, the enchanted and enchanting women who populate the *Odyssey* are erased from world history.

6.2 JOHN TZETZES AND THE REWRITING OF WOMEN'S LIVES

In looking over the course of Byzantine literary history, Malalas' erasure had consequences; his initial erasure reverberated through the ages in the works of other writers who followed his lead. John Tzetzes was one of the most famous Homeric scholars of the twelfth century, long recognized by scholars as a period which saw the resurgence of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as cultural touchstones in Byzantium. Tzetzes wrote two works of particular importance when considering the intersections of enchantment, narrative, and gender: the *Allegories of the Iliad* and *Allegories of the Odyssey*, works in which he sought to present the Homeric epics in terms comprehensible linguistically, theologically, and epistemologically, to his audience of twelfth-century Constantinopolitan elites and, in particular, to the German-born Princess Bertha of Sulzbach who almost by accident became the Byzantine Empress Eirene, and thus needed a crash course in her adopted country's most important texts. Where Malalas' narrative, with its generic mandate to cover vast swathes of time and space, used summary and omission to unwrite the enchanted and, by extension, the female, from the narrative of Odysseus' *nostos*, Tzetzes' poems, operating within a different genre, could not simply omit these objectionable elements, since the work was intended to have pedagogical value: the Empress Eirene needed to learn the plot of the Homeric epics, and she needed to learn how to properly interpret the confounding things she encountered there. Thus, where Malalas used unwriting as a narrative strategy for diminishing the role of women, Tzetzes uses a different strategy, rewriting, with the same result.

This can be seen, for instance, in how Tzetzes rewrites one episode of Odysseus' *nostos* that Malalas had unwritten. When Odysseus has lost all his crew and ship, Homer recounts how the goddess Ino had saved him by providing him with a magic veil that could help him swim to shore. Malalas omitted this entirely, instead proposing that it was Phoenician sailors who

saved him. Tzetzes takes a different tack, using allegory to offer a rational or naturalistic explanation, suggesting that Ino is a bird:

> Homer, playing with witticisms, as I said,
> calls the shearwater '*Ino,*' and her '*veil*' for you is
> that straight course of her wings, along which
> he swam and went ashore to the Phaiakians.[47]

Tzetzes' goal was to use allegory to explain a fantastical, magical, and pagan element of the Homeric text in terms that fit the worldview of his twelfth-century audience, but as in Malalas' *Chronicle*, these narrative and interpretive decisions have consequences for the representation of gender in the poem: powerful women are no longer the salvation of powerless men; instead, it is the hero who saves himself by following the course of a bird towards land; the woman is erased.

In each of these prior instances, the author's principal goal was rationalizing or disenchanting the *Odyssey*, with the consequent effects on the depiction of gender as a secondary, or perhaps incidental, result. But this was not always the case. Take, for instance, Tzetzes' narrative of Odysseus' visit to Circe's island of Aeaea. Tzetzes begins his narrative by summarizing the scene as depicted in the *Odyssey*:

> Homer says that Odysseus's friends were first turned into pigs
> and then turned into men again; but Odysseus himself,
> by the wishes of Hermes, did not suffer this misfortune.[48]

He then disagrees, and offers an allegorical interpretation of these events:

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[47] Tzetzes, *Allegories of the Odyssey* 5.49–52: Παίζων χαριεντίσμασιν ὁ Ὅμηρος, ὡς εἶπον, / Ἰνὼ᾽ λέγει τὴν αἴθυιαν, 'κρήδεμνον᾽ δέ σοι ταύτης / γραμμὴν τὴν τοῦ πτερύγματος ἐκείνην τὴν ὀρθίαν, / καθ᾽ ἥνπερ ἐκνηχόμενος πρὸς Φαίακας ἐξῆλθεν.

[48] Tzetzes, *Allegories of the Odyssey* 10.11–13: τοὺς φίλους Ὀδυσσέως μὲν πρῶτον ἐκχοιρωθῆναι, / πάλιν ἀνθρωπωθῆναι δέ· αὐτὸν τὸν Ὀδυσσέα / βουλαῖς Ἑρμοῦ τὸ δυσχερὲς ταυτὶ μὴ πεπονθέναι.

But Tzetzes says that Odysseus did turn into a pig

even more than his friends, by sleeping with Circe

for a whole year in her brothels.

For that is how Circe is said to turn men into pigs.

Ruling over the island which had few inhabitants

and fearing outbreaks of wars among the neighboring peoples,

she established brothels and thus made many

of those who sailed past dwell and make an alliance with her.[49]

Tzetzes thus offers a fundamental rewrite of Circe: she is no longer a powerful and divine ruler of an independent island, but an ordinary madame running a brothel. This allegorical rewriting allows Tzetzes to remove the enchanted or magical elements of the ancient pagan Homeric narrative, rewriting it in rational and human-centered terms that reflect the twelfth-century social and cultural context. But in rewriting the enchanted element, he also rewrites the gendered power dynamic and adds a layer of misogyny to the rewriting, casting Circe as a madame.

Indeed, elsewhere in his narrative of the *nostos*, Tzetzes transforms powerful women into prostitutes: Quoting Homer's "To the Sirens first you shall come, who beguile all men"[50] he offers the following allegory:

These were very famous prostitutes, who played music,

and Odysseus, terrified lest he be detained by them,

blocked his five senses that are dear to him.[51]

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[49] Tzetzes, *Allegories of the Odyssey* 10.14–21: Τζέτζης τὸν Ὀδυσσέα δέ φησιν ἐκχοιρωθῆναι / πλέον τῶν φίλων τῶν αὐτοῦ, ἐφ᾽ ὁλοκλήρῳ ἔτει / τῇ Κίρκῃ συγκαθεύδοντα πορνείοις τοῖς ἐκείνης. / Οὕτως ἡ Κίρκη λέγεται καὶ γὰρ χοιροῦν ἀνθρώπους. / Κατάρχουσα τῆς νήσου γὰρ οὔσης ὀλιγανθρώπου / καὶ συρραγὰς πολέμων δὲ τῶν πέριξ πτοουμένη, / πορνεῖα συσκευάσασα, πολλοὺς τῶν ἐκπλεόντων / οὕτως ἐποίει κατοικεῖν καὶ συμμαχεῖν ἐκείνῃ.

[50] Tzetzes, *Allegories of the Odyssey* 12.11, from Homer, *Odyssey* 12.39: Σειρῆνας μὲν πρῶτον ἀφίξεαι, αἵ ῥά τε πάντας.

[51] Tzetzes, *Allegories of the Odyssey* 12.12–14: Αὗται πόρναι περίφημοι καὶ ᾠδικαὶ ὑπῆρχον, / καὶ πτοηθεὶς ὁ Ὀδυσσεύς, μὴ συσχεθῇ καὶ ταύταις, / τὰς πέντε τῶν αἰσθήσεων ἐμφράττει τὰς καὶ φίλους.

Here, the same principles are at work: in considering how to render the mythological or the marvelous in the ancient pagan epic into human terms legible to an orthodox Byzantine audience, Tzetzes writes out the supernatural.

Considered in this way, Tzetzes' allegorical method reflects what the Byzantines considered believable, and this tells us about the horizons of possibility for women in Byzantium. In Book 1, for instance, Tzetzes considers that the "'deeds of men and gods which singers celebrate,' / means private individuals and wise ones, of commoners and kings."[52] In allegorizing in this way, Tzetzes opens up the possibility for many different possibilities in how the pagan gods and the semi-divine heroes could be rendered; there are many possibilities that he can imagine within the life of a man. Hephaistos can be "blacksmiths";[53] Zeus can be "a king and an astrologer, a diviner, a mage, wise in all things";[54] Hermes can be merchants;[55] and "Tantalos, being the high priest and ruler, was punished / for revealing the mysteries of the gods while he was alive".[56] Men can have a variety of positions, and those positions can range from ordinary professions (blacksmith, merchant) to high positions such as priest and ruler. Women, by contrast, are prostitutes.[57]

6.3 HOMERIC MONSTERS IN THE BYZANTINE WORLD

In his book *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen "propose[s] by way of a first foray" what he defines as "a method of reading cultures from the monsters they engender."[58] That is to say, what a culture con-

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[52] Tzetzes, *Allegories of the Odyssey* 1.320–21, from Hom.*Od*.1.338: Ἔργ' ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε, τά τε κλείουσιν ἀοιδοί·' / ἰδιωτῶν τε καὶ σοφῶν, κοινῶν καὶ βασιλέων.

[53] Tzetzes, *Allegories of the Odyssey* 1.233: τοὺς πυρεργάτας.

[54] Tzetzes, *Allegories of the Odyssey* 11.141: ἀστρολόγου, μάντεως, μάγου, σοφοῦ τοῖς πᾶσι.

[55] Tzetzes, *Allegories of the Odyssey* 1.202: ἐμπόρων.

[56] Tzetzes, *Allegories of the Odyssey* 11.136–37: Ἀρχιερεὺς καὶ ἄρχων δὲ ὁ Τάνταλος ὑπάρχων, / ζῶν τὰ θεῶν μυστήρια εἰπὼν ἐτιμωρήθη.

[57] Susan Lasner's suggestion that "what we choose to support, to write about, to imagine—even in narratology—seems to me as much a function of our own desire as of any incontrovertible evidence that a particular aspect of narrative is (im)proper or (ir)relevant" perhaps opens up further possibilities for reading into Tzetzes' instrumental use of female characters in the epics (2005, 396).

[58] Cohen 1996, 3.

siders monstrous is not something inherent within the monster itself, but is a social construct that reflects cultural assumptions: "the monster," he writes, is "an embodiment of a certain cultural moment—of a time, a feeling, and a place."[59] In this way, what Tzetzes chooses to allegorize, that is, what he considers a monstrous or incredible thing that needs to be recategorized as something recognizable to that culture, as something non-monstrous, reveals much about the culture that cannot tolerate its monstrousness. Cohen argues that "the monster is the harbinger of a category crisis"; in this case, what to do with women with magical powers, who, in Cohen's words, "refuse to participate in the classificatory order of things"; this is what allegory is: a way of rewriting unclassifiable things into the classificatory order of the reception culture. Cohen argues that "the monster polices the borders of the possible," and it is here that allegorizing can be seen as an ideological act.[60] Indeed, the cases of Malalas and Tzetzes represent an almost opposite method from the monsterization that Cohen describes. Rather than accepting the possibility of monsters who defy categorization, Malalas and Tzetzes recreate monstered worlds in which monsters cannot exist. That which was monstrous is domesticated, that which was beyond existing definitions is rewritten to be constrained. For those things (including both people and places) that cannot be recategorized, Malalas and Tzetzes simply erase them by not narrating their existence at all.

What was possible for women in the Homeric storyworld was not possible in the Byzantine version of their past; as Maria Mavroudi has argued: "we recognize that the attitude of a society regarding aspects of its past reveals its views about the present."[61] And, indeed, historiography in Byzantium amply demonstrates a broader unwriting of Byzantine women. Kinloch, for instance, has demonstrated how the thirteenth-century historian George Akropolites subordinated female to male characters through a variety of means ("first, by the manner in which they are grammatically signified, identified, and named; second, by what they are presented as doing in the story; and third, by how their actions are made meaningful within the broader nar-

[59] Cohen 1996, 4.
[60] Cohen 1996, 6.
[61] Mavroudi 2012, 53.

rative").[62] Similar narratological principles underlie the historiographical production of the elite imperial literary circles in twelfth-century Constantinople in which Tzetzes was operating. Rather than rewrite the boundary more capaciously to allow the complicated women of myth into the realm of the possible, he rewrote the women he found in the *Odyssey* to squeeze into the much narrower confines of the possible: prostitutes, for instance.

In this, Tzetzes and Malalas are participants in a longer Byzantine tradition of the reception of powerful women. Mavroudi, for instance, describes how "the ancient sources read by the Byzantines offered a range of positive and negative evaluations for [the Classical Athenian] Aspasia ranging between a prostitute and a respectable woman."[63] Among these is "an elaborate negative portrayal" by Tzetzes, who "presents her as the cause of the Peloponnesian War" because the Megarians "had insulted his wedded wife, Aspasia, whom they had formerly known as a prostitute in their city."[64] Similarly, Procopius, a contemporary of Malalas, marked the Empress Theodora as a prostitute in his *Secret History*; Leonora Neville notes that Theodora "has two big scenes that figure prominently in any introductory course on Byzantine history. The first concerns her life before she married Justinian, in which she was a lowlife actress and prostitute."[65] This reputation has also been central to her popular reception through to the twenty-first century. While an academic work like David Potter's *Theodora: Actress, Empress, Saint* (2015) addresses this element of her life, Stella Duffy's historical novel, with only one word different, centers this element as one of the three things for which she should be known: *Theodora: Actress, Empress, Whore* (2011). Indeed, the novel opens by foreshadowing this future: "Theodora was not yet old enough to be required to do more than dance and tumble, but—like all the girls in the rehearsal room—she would be one day" (Duffy 2011, n.p.). For Tzetzes, then, the allegorization of the powerful women of the *Odyssey* as prostitutes is part of the oeuvre-spanning misogyny which

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[62] Kinloch 2020, 303.

[63] Mavroudi 2012, 54.

[64] Mavroudi 2012, 55. The source is Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 360.943–61.

[65] Neville 2019, 14.

defines Tzetzes, who "is repeatedly sarcastic towards women renowned for their erudition."[66]

Beyond the confines of their own work, the treatment of women by Tzetzes and Malalas is part of a long tradition of medieval misogyny as embodied in the Matter of Troy. A century after Tzetzes, the Sicilian judge Guido delle Colonne wrote his Latin *Historia Destrutionis Troiae*, which simply features long misogynistic digressions.[67] Indeed, as Hilke Hoogenboom argues elsewhere in this volume, Guido's rejection of the fantastical was an ideological choice about how to tell history and what should be included: Guido felt that previous authors had "made a grave mistake by presenting its material in a fabulous manner. Guido creates a new and more truthful Trojan history than his predecessor by using the right kind of material."[68] Part of Guido's own practice of translation, then, was a rewriting for ideological purposes, and one such purpose was to portray (especially elite) women in a negative way. Guido's text, then, when translated into almost all the vernacular languages of Europe, also transported various misogynistic ideas across linguistic and cultural borders.[69] These medieval translations of Trojan War material featured rants against Medea's mutability, Helen's inconstancy in her affair with Paris, and other examples of women behaving in ways contrary to the patriarchal values of the time.

The misogyny of Malalas and Tzetzes is more subtle, though perhaps no less damaging, than Guido's, since it operates not through the open discourse of misogynistic tirade or digression, but is in a way obscured behind the seeming objective rhetoric of history or allegory. But what an analysis of the narratological decisions these authors made and the ways in which allegory operates as a mode of rewriting is that these decisions are informed by ideological concerns, particularly as they relate to the intersection of gender

[66] Mavroudi 2012, 56; she also cites further examples both from Tzetzes' own Homeric scholarship and as relates to references to the educated women he met in his own circles.

[67] For a brief over of the modern scholarly consensus on the text's misogyny, see Hilke Hoogenboom (chapter 7) in this volume.

[68] Hoogenboom, chapter 7.

[69] Hoogenboom focuses on the case of Penthesilea (chapter 7 in this volume); for a similar treatment of the various misogynist translations of the story of Medea, see Goldwyn 2019.

and power and the potentiality of women's lives. Allegory and historiography in Byzantium, broadly conceived, removed enchantment—the pagan, the divine—from the *Odyssey*, but in so doing not only removing the multiplicity of ways in which women's power and agency manifested themselves in the storyworld of the poem, but also limited the ways in which Byzantines could conceive of women's lives in their own culture.

Such writing practices existed across the broad spectrum of Homeric reception, indeed, from its very origins. In his *Histories*, Herodotus, among the first authors to engage in intertextually with the Homeric epics, begins by informing his audience that he is writing so that "the doings of mankind"[70] may not be lost to time, thus explicitly excluding from his account the role of gods through revision of the mythical past, where divine women such as Athena, Circe, and Calypso held such sway in the *Odyssey*. And though the *anthropon* in this context could include women, that he will focus on "that which caused them to war against one another"[71] unwrites them from history, since war was a principally male undertaking.

In surveying Akropolites' *Syngraphe Chronike*, Kinloch notes that "first and most obvious observation [...] about female characters in the text is quantitative; there are simply far fewer of them" and "large sections of the narrative—especially those with a military focus [...] are populated almost exclusively by men."[72] Not only does Akropolites minimize the number of women and omit narration of their lives, even when he does narrate female characters, "they are overwhelmingly marginal to the meaning that the actions in which they participate have for the wider narrative."[73] Within the context of Homeric reception, contemporary feminist authors have sought to recuperate or rewrite the lives of the unwritten Homeric women. Works such as Margaret Atwood's *Penelopiad*, Christa Woolf's *Cassandra*, Madeline Miller's *Circe*, and, entering into the Latin tradition of the Trojan War, Ursula Le Guin's *Lavinia* (a revision of Virgil's *Aeneid*) focalize the narratives through the eyes of Homeric women. Whereas, for an author like Malalas, in whose account of Odysseus' *nostos* women only appear when

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[70] Herodotus, *Histories* 1.1: τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων. Translation my own.

[71] Herodotus, *Histories* 1.1: δι᾽ ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι.

[72] Kinloch 2020, 309.

[73] Kinloch 2020, 327.

they are narratologically proximate to him, in these works, the primary narrator-focalizer stays with the women regardless of their proximity to men. Though it is unlikely that Margaret Atwood ever read John Malalas or John Tzetes, the shade of Penelope who is the first-person narrator nevertheless obliquely rejects the tradition of male authorship about the Trojan War of which Malalas and Tzetzes were a part and that consistently undermined her achievements and autonomy:

> I realised how many people were laughing at me behind my back—how they were jeering, making jokes about me, jokes both clean and dirty; how they were turning me into a story, or into several stories, though not the kind of stories I'd prefer to hear about myself.[74]

Atwood's narrative of Penelope's life makes other narratological choices: she focalizes through different (predominantly female) characters than Tzetzes or Malalas and summarizes or omits different scenes entirely from her narrative. Indeed, in this context of female erasure, it is significant that while Atwood centers her entire narrative around Penelope, Malalas does not mention her at all. Though the fundamental plot remains the same, the narratological choices made by these authors show that the interpretive value of the Homeric epics, their meaning in the various historical, political, and cultural contexts in which they are told and retold, rest in large part not just on which story is told, but how it is told. In disenchanting the mythological elements of the Homeric poems, Tzetzes, Malalas, and other Byzantine writers in the rationalizing tradition either inadvertently or consciously diminished the power of the women who populated the world of the *Odyssey*, a pattern of interpretive misogyny which has only now begun to be overwritten.

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[74] Atwood 2005, 3.

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Femme Fatale

Penthesilea and the Last Stand of Chivalry in Guido delle Colonne's Historia Destructionis Troiae

Hilke Hoogenboom

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Although the happenings of old are covered daily by recent happenings, yet certain deeds of old have stood out for a long time already, which are so worthy of our remembrance, due to the greatness of their longevity, that neither old age with its invisible bites is strong enough to destroy them nor do the old courses of time gone by hold them in sleeping silence.[1]

S OME DEEDS, ALTHOUGH distant in time, still fascinate people today, such as the story of the Trojan War. In the Middle Ages, this story not only served to entertain, but was also used for political, cultural, and social purposes. Guido delle Colonne was one of many who wrote about the Trojan War in his *Historia Destructionis Troiae* ("The history of the destruc-

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[1] Guido, *History* f. 1ʳ: "Licet cotidie uetera recentibus obruant, nonnulla tamen iam dudum uetera precesserunt que sic sui magnitudine uiuaci sunt digna memoria ut nec ea cecis morsibus uetustas abolere preualeat nec exacti temporis antiqua curricula sopita taciturnitate concludant." In the annotation of the Latin text I have followed Griffin's (1936) edition. All translations of Latin texts in this article are my own unless otherwise indicated. I have chosen to use my own translations, because I have tried to reflect Guido's writing style, which can be a bit stiff and business-like.

tion of Troy", 1287), a work inspired by Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie*. Guido's history was very popular in its own day and throughout the remainder of the Medieval period, even more so than his main source.[2] Nevertheless, even though some modern scholars take a more nuanced approach to Guido's *History*,[3] the general assessment of this work is that it is a dry and bleak story that reduces the *Roman*'s characters to mere shadows of their former selves.[4] Additionally, many scholars interpret the *History* as a misogynistic work of history, more so than the *Roman*.[5] In this article, we will see that this interpretation of the *History* is worth re-assessing, as Wolfram Keller has also attested.[6] However, whereas Keller interprets the *History* as a *Fürstenspiegel*, looking mainly at the political message the work conveys, I will focus on its social, cultural, and specifically gendered aspects.

To understand what moral message the *History* offers, this article will focus on one character in particular: the Amazonian queen Penthesilea. She leads her warrior-maidens to Troy when all seems lost for the Trojans.[7] Penthesilea is an intriguing character, because she is the only wom-

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[2] Guido's work was more popular and more widely used than Benoît's mainly because it was written in Latin, at the time a more universal language than Benoît's Old French (Kleinbaum 1983, 60). Keller (2008, 133) remarks that Guido's *History* has been preserved in more than 150 manuscripts, which shows its immense popularity.

[3] Wigginton 1964; Meek (1974, xiv) admits that the *History* might not be the most elegant, but "the *Historia* has a modest but assured place as a work of literature". See especially Keller 2008, who pleads for the inherent merits and value of this work, seeing it as profoundly different from Benoît's work. Bedel (2013, § 1) claims that the *History* has some merits of its own and is worth researching, although it is often ignored in scholarship (see also Bedel 2013a, 76).

[4] Lumiansky 1954, 733 (he concludes that the *History's* characters are mere "wooden figures"); Benson 1980, 4.

[5] Wigginton 1964, v–ix; Kleinbaum 1983, 60–61 (she does not explicitly call Guido an anti-feminist, but does interpret the Amazonian episode in a way that reflects very negatively on women); Jung 1996, 564; Simpson 1998, 416 (note that his analysis is more nuanced than that of Reinle); Reinle 2000, 19; Keller 2008, 192 (who calls Guido's *History* an "anti-feminist epic"); Bedel 2013b, § 29–44.

[6] In his analysis, the Trojans serve as effeminate, changeable, and emotional: they are the example of how one should not govern. The imperial Greek rule model, in which the common good, rationality, and in particular empire go before everything, serves as a more positive example (Keller 2008, 133–263).

[7] Guido, *History* f. 102ᵛ–105ʳ.

an in the *History* who actually fights beside the Trojan warriors in Troy's hour of need. Until then, the women in this history were either catalysts of war (Hesione and Helen) or bystanders, sometimes entangled in relationships with heroes that could affect these heroes' physical and mental state (think here of Briseida and her love for Troilus and Diomedes).[8] The Amazons seem to perform a completely different role in this work of history.

Many scholars have assessed the Amazons and their warrior-queen negatively. Keller, for instance, treats the Amazons together with some more fantastical, even monstrous elements in the *History*. Although he concedes that the Amazons are not as monstrous as, for instance, the centaur fighting with the Trojans, he does relate them "to the effeminate Trojan principle of fickle rule".[9] He calls them "unnatural knights" and "creatures", emphasising that they are contrary to nature and, consequently, that their deviant and feminine behaviour makes their deaths deserved ones.[10] It cannot be denied that there are passages in the *History* that are misogynistic, to say the least. The narrator, for instance, argues that women cannot be trusted and are always looking for men to seduce and have sex with.[11] Nevertheless, this does not mean that the work as a whole – and this passage in particular – should be labelled as merely a misogynistic, second-best translation of the *Roman de Troie*. By focussing solely on such misogynistic readings of the *History*, I think we might overlook the most important moral lesson it would like its readers to learn. I argue that we should see the *History* as part of a larger, literary discourse about 'proper' chivalric conduct and the search for peace.[12] The character Penthesilea provides the reader with a new viewpoint on this larger discourse by playing with both the gendered and chivalric rules as described in thirteenth-century literature.

Firstly, I will analyse the differences between the *History* and the *Roman de Troie*, so that we will be able to understand the main narrative and the

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[8] Cf. Bedel 2013b, § 28.

[9] Keller 2008, 133–263.

[10] Keller 2008, 183–4. Wigginton 1964 does not go into the role of the Amazons in his dissertation at all. For other negative interpretations of the Amazons, please refer to footnote 5.

[11] Guido, *History* f. 84ʳ.

[12] Cf. Bedel 2013a, 75–90.

moralistic undertones of the *History*. Secondly, I will analyse the representation of men and women in Guido's work. Thirdly, I will look in more detail at Queen Penthesilea: how does she combine the male and the female within her character? Especially her similarities with Hector prove interesting when trying to understand her warrior-role within the *History*. Through Penthesilea, the narrator is able to discuss what is good (and bad) chivalry, providing the reader with a message of peace and hope at the end of his work.

7.1 GUIDO VS. BENOÎT: TRANSLATION, ADAPTATION, REPLACEMENT

Benoît's *Roman de Troie* is a courtly romance written in the twelfth century. The narrator – we shall call him Benoît from now on, by which I do not wish to imply that the narrator and the historical person Benoît are the same – wanted to provide the whole story about the Trojan war, translating the Latin sources of Dares and Dictys that he had used as his main sources,

> so that those who are ignorant of Latin
> can enjoy it **in French**.
> The history is most noble and grand,
> and it treats of a great enterprise and great deeds.
> It has been related in many diverse ways
> how Troy was destroyed,
> but the **truth** of the matter is rarely heard.[13]

Later, he says that he will not alter his material, although he does include "some clever additions of my own".[14] If we compare his text with Dares and

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[13] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 38–44 (my emphasis): "Que cil qui n'entendent la letre / Se puissent deduire **el romanz**: / Mout est l'estoire riche e granz. / E de grant uevre et de grant fait. / En maint sen avra l'om retrait, / Saveir com Troie fu perie, / Mais **la verté** est poi oïe." All translations of Benoît's text have been taken from Burgess & Kelly 2017. I have tried to present their prose translation in a way that makes it easier to follow the Old French, which was written in octosyllabic verses. I quote Burgess & Kelly (2017) throughout, albeit acknowledging that the translation of for example vv. 38–39 may be viewed as freely rather than literally translated from the original Old French.

[14] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 142: "qu'aucun bon dit".

Dictys, it becomes clear that these clever additions are actually great in number: the love story of Troilus, Briseida, and Diomedes, for instance, is absent from Benoît's sources.[15] The *Roman*, then, uses its sources freely, so that it will be intelligible and entertaining to its audience. Benoît presents his work as subservient to his historiographical sources, but at the same time he also seems to challenge them by adding passages and by rewriting these pre-texts into another genre and framework (after all, Benoît has created poetry out of two prose narratives). The *Roman* acknowledges the authority of Dares and Dictys,[16] but also shows *itself* to be an authority on the subject matter, presenting itself as the most authoritative end point of a long tradition of stories about the fall of Troy.[17] Indeed, Benoît warns his colleagues in his epilogue not to criticise and certainly not to alter his narrative.[18]

Although Benoît envisaged his *Roman* as the end-point of a long historical tradition on Troy narratives, this did not stop Guido from using the *Roman* to create the *History of the destruction of Troy*. In his prologue, the narrator – I will call him Guido from now on – makes it clear why he felt the need to write another history of Troy:

> For indeed some [writers] of this history, by playing with the poetic art, have transformed with certain fictions the truth of this matter into made up fabrications, so that they were seen to describe to their listeners **not true things**, which they have written down, **but rather fabulous ones**.[19]

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[15] Wigginton 1964, 62; Burgess & Kelly 2017, 5; Kelly 1995, 221–41. Kelly explains in his article how Benoît, with the material he had, invented Briseida's story while still staying true to his source material – according to Medieval standards of *inventio*. Keller (2008, 141) says that by adding some romantic aspects to his narrative Benoît fictionalised his material to a certain extent.

[16] Malatrait 2011, 46–48. Indeed, Benoît often explicitly mentions Dares' work, stating that his information came straight from him (and is, consequently, trustworthy). See, for instance, line 726 (where he refers to Dares with the words "li Livres"); lines 5093–8 (Dares began here a description of the main players of the narrative, so Benoît will do the same); lines 10010–12 (Hector slew a thousand men, Dares tells us this).

[17] Blumenfeld-Kosinski 1980, 151–8.

[18] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 30301–16.

[19] Guido, *History* f. 1ʳ (my emphasis): "Nonnulli enim iam eius ystorie poetice alludendo ueritatem ipsius in figurata commenta quibusdam fictionibus transsumpserunt, vt **non uera** que scripserunt uiderentur audientibus perscripsisse **sed pocius fabulosa**."

Guido is not happy with all the poets who have used the Trojan war as their subject matter. He explicitly criticises Homer in particular, but also Ovid and Virgil are not spared.[20] Although Benoît is not mentioned, it is clear that Guido targets his work as well.[21] Even though the *Roman* provided the fullest and most complete account of the Trojan war, it made a grave mistake – according to Guido – by presenting its material in a fabulous manner. Guido creates a new and more truthful Trojan history than his predecessor by using the right kind of material (the accounts of Dares and Dictys via the *Roman*) and the (in his eyes) correct narrative form of *historia* and not *fabula*, as poets before him had done.[22]

This view on poetry and the *Roman* in particular explains the many alterations that were made in the *History*: Guido has greatly reduced the number of more fantastical passages – the famous *Chambre de Beautés*, for instance, gets hardly any attention at all – and he lessens the importance of love to give a more trustworthy account of his material.[23] Additionally, Guido says in his prologue that he wrote his work "especially for the use of those who study grammar".[24] He remarks that his work was originally written at the request of the archbishop of Salerno, Matheus de Porta.[25] This provides proof for placing the work in more spiritual, learned circles in comparison to the *Roman*, which was most likely orally performed at court.[26] This is probably one of the reasons why the *History* has been seen as a continuation of misogynistic, clerical texts in opposition to the courtly *Roman*.

Because the *History* was meant for an educated audience, this account of the war is full of learned digressions and moral messages that the read-

[20] Guido, *History* f. 1ʳ. Cf. Mueller 2013, 50–52.

[21] Cf. Keller 2008, 144.

[22] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies* I.44.5; cf, Mehtonen 1996, 19–61.

[23] See, for instance, Wigginton 1964, 64–65; Benson 1980, 4. Just as in Benoît's *Roman*, to give a factual, trustworthy account of what had happened does not mean that Guido depicts the Greek and Trojan heroes in what would nowadays be considered a historically accurate manner. Guido's heroes and damsels are still typical knights and ladies. See Simpson 1998, 421–2.

[24] Guido, *History* f. 1ᵛ: "in vtilitatem eorum precipue qui gramaticam legunt".

[25] Guido, *History* f. 129ᵛ.

[26] Burgess & Kelly 2017, 7; Keller 2008, 196; Wigginton 1964 makes a solid case for reading the *History* as a clerical piece of literature in his dissertation.

er should take to heart. The moral explanation of the quest of the Golden Fleece forms a case in point, in which the work warns its reader of greed that will lead to one's own destruction.[27] Apparently, the *History* does want to convey a particular moral message. I agree with W.B. Wigginton, who reads the work as a moral and allegorical history, and with Keller, who also underlines the allegorical value of it – although his allegorical interpretation differs from mine in many ways.[28] If we take all these differences into consideration, it becomes clear that the *History* and the character of Penthesilea within it must be assessed in their own right: the *History* has made several fundamental adaptations in regard to its main text, which should not be explained away by any lack of poetical ability.

7.2 LICENTIOUS WOMEN AND VIOLENT KNIGHTS

Just as other medieval works of history the *History* asserts it tells the truth, the "uera scripta", to its readers: "so that they know how to separate the true from the false concerning the things that are written down/transcribed about said history in grammar books".[29] Simultaneously, its aim is to instruct its readers on how to live their lives well. But what kind of moral message does the work convey overall? I argue that the intriguing character of Penthesilea can provide us with information to better understand the *History* as a whole. However, before we can understand her position and the moral messages her character offers, we have to take a closer look at the portrayal of other men and women in the *History* first. Only then we can appreciate the special role that has been assigned to Penthesilea, standing between the male and the female, the real and the fantastical.

In clerical manuals of the thirteenth century, there was a strongly dichotomous way of thinking about men and women. In Thomasin von Zerk-

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[27] Guido, *History* f. 2ᵛ–3ʳ. Other passages with a moralistic undertone include f. 8v (where Guido criticises the nobility for dressing up with such refinement, as Medea does); f. 50ᵛ–f. 52ᵛ (where the origin of idolatry is explained); and f. 100ᵛ (where Guido distances himself from Homer: Achilles was not a hero, but a villain).

[28] Bedel (2013a, 87) also acknowledges that the *History* is full of *exempla* of vices and virtues that the reader must learn from. It is a moralistic work and not shallow at all.

[29] Guido, *History* f. 1ᵛ: "ut separare sciant uerum a falso de hiis que de dicta ystoria in libris gramaticalibus sunt descripta."

laere's *Der Welsche Gast* (1215–1216), for instance, the narrator addresses men and women separately, bestowing each sex with different virtues (and vices).[30] It was believed that women were susceptible to sins of the flesh, which is why virginity and chastity were so commendable. Vincent de Beauvais tells his reader in his *On the erudition of the sons of nobility* that the vice of "licentiousness" ("lasciuia") would lead innocent maidens to "unclean thoughts" ("noxias cogitaciones") and "desires of the flesh" ("carnis uoluptates"), ruining their virtue. That is why women should be kept at home, strictly under guard.[31] Many of the female characters in the *History* seem to fit this more negative clerical stance on the female sex.[32] One such character is Medea, whose indirect role in the first destruction of Troy is also part of this history. She does all the things an ideal lady should not do: she takes the initiative in her relationship with Jason, seducing him with her alluring appearance. She even sleeps with him before they are married.[33] She appears to fit perfectly in Guido's description of (most) ladies in general, who always try to quench their sexual thirst by actively searching for men.[34] However, the *History* shows that there are also women who are morally praiseworthy. Polyxena is a virginal princess who guards her virginity and does not show any initiative in her almost-marriage with Achilles. When she is sentenced to death after the war, she accepts her fate and dies worthily, making all those who witness her death shed bitter tears.[35] Polyxena is praiseworthy because she protects her virginity at all costs, and thus confirms the clerical view on the most important female virtue.

Like women, men also have certain vices to beware of and virtues to uphold, which are described in clerical manuals of the thirteenth century, as, for instance, in *le Roman des Eles* and *l'Ordene de Chevalerie*. According to these manuals, to be a true knight one was required not only to show proper and admirable conduct on the field of battle, but also at court and towards

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[30] Cf. Etienne de Fougères' *Livre de Manières* st. 244–313.

[31] Vincent de Beauvais, *On the Erudition* XLII.6 + XLIII.1–9.

[32] Bedel 2013b, § 30–34.

[33] Guido, *History* f. 8ᵛ.

[34] Guido, *History* f. 84ʳ.

[35] Guido, *History* f. 47ᵛ + 112ᵛ–113ʳ. She even says that she prefers death over the loss of her chastity.

the ladies.[36] Knights' often violent behaviour on the battlefield was something that worried the clergy very much, which is why they tried to steer this side of chivalry into calmer waters by emphasising the importance of other qualities within the good knight.[37] Men in the *History* seem to have an inclination to excessive violence. The call of war and, with it, fame, entices many characters to start a war without ever considering the misery that it will bring. Indeed, war will not only bring the ruin of cities and complete livelihoods, but also of good chivalry; although chivalry is what attracts many knights to war in the first place. This becomes most clear in the famous council meeting of the Trojans before the start of the second Trojan war. King Priam and his sons decide whether to take action against the Greeks for the abduction of his sister Hesione. Helenus, one of Priam's sons and a priest, advises the assembly to maintain peace: after all, war will only bring sadness and sorrow. When Troilus hears these words, he lashes out against his brother with harsh words, accusing him of "faintheartedness" ("pusillanimitas") and an excessive love of luxury.[38] This argument can be typified as a typical clash between the clergy, who embody the voice of peace (both in literature and society) and the chivalric class, who symbolise the cry for war.[39] The knightly class sees war and courtly chivalry as two sides of the same coin, whereas the clergy show in their manuals that they are two different things altogether that cannot co-exist. The *History* tries to pry

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[36] Kaeuper 1999, 4.

[37] Kaeuper 1999, 64–87. See, for instance, Raoul de Hodenc, *le Roman des Eles* 135–45, 274–508; Anonymous, *L'Ordene de Chevalerie* 263–300; Etienne de Fougères, *Le Livre des Manières*, st. 135–68.

[38] Guido, *History* f. 33ᵛ.

[39] Malatrait (2011, 132–33) has analysed the confrontation between Helenus and Troilus in the *Roman* along similar lines. She argues that this scene reflects the tensions between the knightly and clerical classes of Benoît's own time. I have largely taken my analysis from her and applied (and adapted it) to the *History*. Cf. Simpson (1998, 419–20) argues that Helenus and other priests represent failed clerical voices. The clerical voice of the narrator is successful in warning his readers for the (political) mistakes his characters have made. Bedel (2013a, 75–90) has analysed the continuing quest for peace in Guido's work. She also argues that the priestly voices are those of peace and that, through human failure, the leaders of both the Greeks and the Trojans cannot achieve a peaceful solution (Bedel 2013a, 79, 88).

apart violence from chivalry as well, leading the way to a new, peaceful kind of chivalric conduct.

7.3 PENTHESILEA: LADY, LOVER, KNIGHT

It has become clear that more traditional, clerical ideas about proper behaviour of the sexes (as written down in literature of that time) are incorporated in the *History*. Nevertheless, this work does not solely consist of these rather strict, paradigmatic ways of thinking about the right kind of gender behaviour; there is also room to play with the gendered rules through the character of Penthesilea. In order to understand the role and function of this Amazonian queen and the kind of discussions she generates, Judith Butler's theory on gender performativity and distinction in *Gender Trouble* and *Undoing Gender* will prove helpful. Butler has written that one's anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance do not have to conform with one another. Although common cultural ideas about sex and gender intricately bind these three components together, Butler argues that these links are not pre-existing facts, but constructs formed by the cultural and political society we live in that are reinforced as the norm by repetitive performances.[40] The *History*'s battling Amazons show this clearly. Anatomically, Penthesilea and her warrior-maidens are female: Penthesilea is called "virgin" ("uirgo"), her maiden-followers "girls" ("puellae").[41] Their gender identity and gender performance, however, are much more complex. Penthesilea herself already attests that she is a 'femme extraordinaire' when she speaks to Pyrrhus on the field of battle:

> And when she had come nearer to Pyrrhus so that Pyrrhus could clearly understand her words, Penthesilea reproached him greatly in her own words for the death of Hector, which was treacherously brought about by his father, "for whose vengeance not only skilful women but truly the whole world ought to arise to fight, **and we who they say are women** – soon the Greeks will take notice of our deadly blows".[42]

[40] Butler 1999, especially page 175; Butler 2004.
[41] Guido, *History* f. 103ʳ.
[42] Guido, *History* f. 104ʳ (my emphasis): "Et dum ad Pirrum propinquius accessisset ita quod Pirrus liquide poterat intelligere uerba eius, Penthesilea mortem Hectoris

She is a virgin, but also one who fights with men and is their match. She shows both masculine and feminine virtues and characteristics.[43] Her virginity shows clearly that she is neither woman nor man, but both and neither. Both her abstinence from sexual intercourse and her amorous conduct towards the opposite sex prove interesting in this regard, as we will see.

It is clear that an important part of Penthesilea's identity is that she is a virgin queen: she is called "uirgo" and her attire is white, the colour of virginity and purity.[44] Nevertheless, Penthesilea is a virgin who does have amorous feelings towards the opposite sex. Already during the second battle of Troy, when Penthesilea has not yet entered the scene, we know that she sometimes gets involved in amorous relationships, although from a distance. One of the Greek knights, Celidis by name, is killed quickly during this round of fighting, but not before he is described as follows:

> that no one could describe his [Celidis'] appearance, whom the queen of Feminea[45] loved ardently with such a great burning of love that she cared more for him than for herself (…).[46]

This fierce burning ("ardour") can only refer to one kind of love: the amorous love between men and women. In the *Roman de Troie*, Penthesilea's love is more clearly identified as such:[47]

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in uerbis suis sibi multum inproperat proditorie ab eius patre commissam, "ad cuius uindictam non solum mulieres habiles ad pugnandum uerum totus mundus deberet assurgere, **et nos quas mulieres asserunt esse**, - Greci subito sencient letaliter ictus nostros.""

[43] See Partner 1993, 442.

[44] Harwood 2017, 66; Guido, *History* f. 104ʳ.

[45] This is another name for the land of Amazonia. Benoît refers to Penthesilea's country as either *Amazoine* or *Feminie:* Kleinbaum 1983, 51.

[46] Guido, *History* f. 71v: "quod eius formam nullus describere potuisset, quem regina de Feminea tanti amoris ardore precordialiter diligebat quod magis eum carum habebat quam seipsam (…)".

[47] This reading goes against Kleinbaum (1983, 52–53), who calls Penthesilea in her analysis of the *Roman* Celidis' patron, not his lover.

> The queen of Femenie
>
> had been his lover for a long time.
>
> For her sake he was highly honoured,
>
> well known and highly esteemed.
>
> she had sent him his arms and his valuable steed
>
> out of affection and **pure love**,
>
> with which he equipped himself:
>
> for that reason he was often the object of close attention.[48]

Penthesilea had felt "fine amor" for Celidis, a term which is translated here as "pure love", but which is also the term for courtly love.[49] Guido upholds this element of Penthesilea's courtly love for the Greek by using the words "with such a great burning of love" ("tanti amoris ardore").

Indeed, if we look closer, it becomes clear that there is another knight who seems to be the object of Penthesilea's "amor" in both the *History* and the *Roman*: Hector. The *History* says that Penthesilea was bound in friendship to Hector. This could mean that their relationship was one of respected and friendly colleagues alone. However, Penthesilea's sole reason for aiding the Trojans is explained by the terms "because of her love for Hector"("ob amorem Hectoris"):[50]

> At that time the queen of this province [Amazonia, a land in the East] was a certain noble and very warlike maiden, Penthesilea by name, who was much bound in friendship to Hector because of the great worth of his chivalry.[51] And, after she

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[48] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 8831–8 (my emphasis): "La reïne de Femenie / Aveit esté lonc tens s'amie: / Por li esteit mout essasuciez, / Mout coneüz e mout preisiez / Ses armes e son milsoudor, / De chierté e de **fine amor** / Li ot tramis, s'en ert armez: / Por ço ert sovent remirez."

[49] Kay 2000, 84

[50] Guido, *History* f. 103ʳ. Note that not all authors portrayed Penthesilea thus. See, for instance, Albert von Stade, who does not mention Penthesilea's connection to Hector as the reason for her to come to Troy. He merely says that the queen went to Troy "because the king [Priam] asked it" ("rege petente"): *Troilus* IV.805–6.

[51] "Strennuitas" means something like "vivacity, activity". Meek 1974 translates it as "valor". I have chosen to translate the word as "chivalry", since I think Guido here means a specific kind of activity and liveliness on the field of battle. This is not mere

had heard that the Greeks had come with a great army against king Priam, she herself came to Troy to king Priam's aid with one thousand maidens, who fought with great chivalry, to fight because of her love for Hector.[52]

"Amor" can have multiple meanings, ranging from the love between friends to love between lovers.[53] I argue that both meanings of the word "amor" are present here.[54] When Penthesilea hears upon her arrival that Hector has passed away, she weeps for him for many days.[55] These tears are not just the tears of a friend, but also the tears of a lover, which can be deduced from the *Roman de Troie*, in which it is said that "it was common knowledge that she would have loved Hector, / if she had found him alive".[56]

Although there could be some doubt as to whether Penthesilea's feelings for Hector were based more on love or friendship, Penthesilea's relationship with Celidis can only be interpreted in both the *History* and the *Roman* as one between two lovers. Both Hector and Celidis die and it seems that Penthesilea never had the chance to consolidate her love (in the physical sense of the word), but it seems that she did desire to do so – although the *History* seems to be more indirect about Penthesilea's true, amorous feel-

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prowess, but a way of fighting that is civilised and commendable (although reform is also necessary). Niermeyer 1976 and Arnaldi 1970 say it is an honorary title, although they do not go into detail as to what this honorary title entails exactly. Chivalry can also be seen, in a way, as a claim to commendable behaviour and, consequently, as an honorary title.

[52] Guido, *History* f. 103r: "Huius autem prouincie erat tunc regina quedam uirgo nobilis et nimium bellicosa Penthesilea nomine, que Hectorem sibi nimium astrinxerat in amicum propter sue strennuitatis nimiam probitatem. Sed audito quod Greci contra regem Priamum in magno exercitu ueniebant, ipsa in auxilio regis Priami cum mille puellis in multa strennuitate pugnantibus apud Troyam ob amorem Hectoris se contulit pugnaturam."

[53] Schnell 1985, 19.

[54] Warren Carl (1998, 113–4) also remarks on the dubiousness of Hector's and Penthesilea's relationship, but then in Benoît's *Roman de Troie*. In her opinion, this unclarity represents the two themes of Benoît's work: love and war.

[55] Guido, *History* f. 103r.

[56] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 23389–90: "Bien ert seü qu'ele l'amast, / se fust qu'en vie le trovast." The order of Burgess' and Kelly's translation has been slightly altered here.

ings than the *Roman*.[57] Even so, the fact that Penthesilea chooses to be physically present in Troy, combined with her "amor" for Hector, her grief upon hearing about Hector's death, and her anger against the son of Hector's killer are all signs that Penthesilea probably harboured more than just platonic feelings for Hector. Does this mean, then, that Penthesilea could no longer serve as a positive example? After all, many authors argue that (sexual) lust is the worst of all female vices. Is it true that, because Penthesilea was a 'sinful' virgin (at least in thought), she had to die? In regard to the *Roman* the answer seems relatively clear: Penthesilea is an example of a good lady and a good knight.[58] She is even called "the most valiant woman who had ever been born. No woman on earth was more worthy than she or enjoyed higher honour".[59] As has been shown, the *History* does not merely copy the *Roman*, but it is a story of its own with its own moral messages and undertones. Has Guido, then, not only greatly shortened the passages about the Amazons and love in general, but has he also followed the clerical literary tradition and, consequently, portrayed Penthesilea negatively? Is C. Reinle right when she claims that Guido has transformed Benoît's positive portrayal of the Amazons into a passage that reeks of misogyny?[60]

We have to keep in mind that the Amazons are not like ordinary women, as Penthesilea herself attests. Indeed, the Amazons break open conventional gender roles to show that women can do things culturally defined as male – which makes them the perfect candidates to question other pillars of medieval society as well.[61] If Penthesilea had been a maiden like all others, her active stance would have caused disapproval. However, Penthesilea is also a warrior who follows the codes of chivalry. After all, she stays loyal to her comrades-in-arms, fights honourably without deceiving her opponents and gives them a fair chance in the duel at hand, and, maybe most importantly, she does not fight for glory or monetary gain, but for love and loyalty only,

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[57] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 23383–416. Penthesilea and the narrator say multiple times that Penthesilea loved Hector above anyone else.

[58] Kleinbaum 1983, 51–58: she calls her "the female equivalent of the ideal chivalrous knight" (Warren-Carl 1998, 107–128).

[59] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 23979–83.

[60] Reinle 2000, 19.

[61] Kleinbaum 1983, 51; Petit 1983, 83–84.

as she has explicitly said to Pyrrhus.[62] Indeed, nowhere in the text does Penthesilea express a desire for money and fame. This is interesting, since Penthesilea does say that she and her maidens 'have come here to help by bearing arms in order to achieve renown' in the *Roman*.[63] The *History* informs the reader that fame/greed was usually the main drive for the Amazons to fight, but this was apparently not the case for Penthesilea.[64] This alteration in her character is noteworthy, since the desire for fame is something that is frowned upon in the *History*. The fact that she goes to Troy "ob amorem Hectoris" is not problematic either: within the chivalric code it was not disapproved of for knights to have lovers (from afar). This could even lead them to great deeds of valour. It was the knight who would most often take the initiative in his relationship with his paramour, fighting for his lover and showing his worth.[65] In her relationship with Hector, Penthesilea takes the initiative: she decides to go to Troy of her own volition out of loyalty and out of love. Her deeds on the field of battle are fuelled by her love (not her lust) for Hector and her desire for revenge for his death.[66] Her lover, though already deceased, can still inspire her to greatness. In courtly love the woman was usually the commander, the man the follower. He chased the lady and tried to woe her, doing whatever she desired.[67] Here, Penthesilea, although a woman, is the follower, her lover Hector the commander.

This means that we cannot simply place Penthesilea's virginity and her amorous feelings into the realm of the male or the female. Warren-Carl also remarks upon the dubiousness of the Amazons' gender (performativity), arguing that the Amazons' celibacy is a typical female virtue, but that it also enables them to fight well on the field of battle: it was believed that men's powers were drained when having sex. Because the Amazons abstain from

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[62] For a more detailed account of her conduct on the field of battle, see the next section.

[63] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 24100–101.

[64] Guido, *History* f. 103ʳ.

[65] Adler 1963, 14; Schnell 1985, 88.

[66] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 23410–16; Guido, *History* f. 104ʳ.

[67] Diomedes' love for Briseida forms a case in point: he loves her at first sight, but her love is not easily won. He must live in torment for a long time before Briseida finally returns his love: Guido, *History* f. 84ʳ⁻ᵛ.

sexual intercourse, they can fight like men.[68] The female virtue of virginity is what harbours the Amazons' male strength and prowess. It is interesting to note here that the female virtue of virginity is expressed through Penthesilea's armour, a typically male attribute, in both the *Roman* and the *History*.[69] This shows how intricately the male and female sides are intertwined with each other within the Amazons with regard to their behaviour and physique. Penthesilea's virginity makes her a good maiden *and* a good knight. By abstaining from love but at the same time craving it, she becomes the perfect courtly knight.

7.4 HECTOR *REDIVIVUS*

Once we have established that Penthesilea's actions must be understood in the context of the codes of courtly love *and* knighthood, we can go a step further and argue that Hector and the love Penthesilea harbours for him are essential for her role in the narrative. Without Hector, there would be no Penthesilea. Only because of Hector does she get involved in the war. Even more interestingly, because of Hector's death, Penthesilea has to take his place. The only man who was fit to take Hector's place, Troilus,[70] has been killed already by the same man who has Hector's blood on his hands: Achilles. Penthesilea tries to finish what Hector and Troilus could not. If we have a closer look at 1) her motivations for getting involved in the war, 2) the battle scenes in which Penthesilea takes part, and 3) her death, it becomes clear that there are many parallels between her and Hector. Hector's spiri-

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[68] Warren Carl 1998, 117–18: even anatomically, then, the Amazons' bodies function to a certain extent as male bodies. After all, it was believed that men grew weaker by having sex, but women stronger.

[69] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* lines 23429–46; Guido, *History* 104ʳ: "with the devices of their armour glittering like snow" ("intersignis armorum candidis sicut niue"); see Burns 1997, 118–19.

[70] In the catalogue of Trojans the *History* says that Troilus was "either another Hector or second to him" ("uel fuit alius Hector uel secundus ab ipso") in regard to strength and "strennuitas" ("chivalry") in warfare: *History* f. 47ʳ. Hector and Troilus are also referred to as "the two Hectors" ("duos Hectores"): Guido, *History* f. 99v.

tual presence and his qualities are visible in Penthesilea: to a certain extent, she becomes his alter ego, a *Hector redivivus*.[71]

Firstly, Hector's and Penthesilea's respective motivations to get involved in the war are in some ways similar. Hector was not keen to start a war with the Greeks; during the important council meeting with king Priam, he was the first to sue for peace, although unsuccessfully. However, once the war has started, Hector does not back away from his duty and leads the Trojan forces into battle. This is what makes Hector a commendable knight, an *exemplum* of good chivalry in the *History*: a good knight tries to avoid war at all costs,[72] but serves his king and country when there is no other way, staying faithful and loyal to the ones he loves. In the same way, as we have already asserted, Penthesilea is driven by loyalty and love to fight on the Trojan side. She does not show as much reservation about waging war as Hector did, but what is most important here is that she does not get involved in the war because of her desire for fame and/or greed. Penthesilea shows here the same knightly codes of conduct as her male alter ego. I would like to draw attention to this fact, since not all authors have portrayed Penthesilea's motivations so positively. The *History* could also have followed the accounts of Dares and Dictys, which show her as greedy. After all, Dictys claims that Penthesilea,

> who, after she had learned that Hector had been slain, disheartened by his death and desirous to return home, had on the spot decided to stay, since she had been seduced in the end by Alexander with much gold and silver.[73]

In Dictys' version, Penthesilea appears to be some kind of mercenary. The *History* does not follow this portrayal, but anchors Penthesilea's reason for

[71] For more analysis on this topic, please refer to Van den Bergen-Pantens (1982, 219–30), who analyses the portraits of both Hector and Penthesilea in several medieval works.

[72] Cf. Bedel (2013a, 75–90), where she shows that the heroes in this work have to choose between their inner desires (often based on love or the longing for revenge), which lead to war, and the common good of the community, i.e. peace and stability.

[73] Dictys, *Journal of the Trojan War* IV.2.5–9: "quae postquam interemptum Hectorem cognovit, perculsa morte eius regredì domum cupiens ad postremum multo auro atque argento ab Alexandro inlecta ibidem opperiri decreverat."

staying in the narrative of courtly love and loyalty. Penthesilea's love must not be confused with lust here. If it was only lust she had felt for him, we cannot explain her decision to stay after she had discovered that Hector was already dead. This portrayal of Penthesilea shows that the *History* was not so misogynistic as Reinle argues. One could even say that she is more positively described in the *History* in regard to her motivations to join the war than in the *Roman*, since her desire for fame has been completely deleted in the *History*. I also do not see a reason here for interpreting Guido's portrayal of Penthesilea's love for Hector as negative, although the clergy was often wary of courtly love.[74]

Secondly, Hector's and Penthesilea's behaviour on the battlefield merits our closer attention: both are the leaders of their people and do not back away from a fight. Nevertheless, they do not show excessive violence or a breach of the knightly codes of honour in their mode of conduct. Hector saves his family and friends on many occasions, who respect him greatly and follow him everywhere.[75] It is clear that Hector carries Troy's weight on his shoulders, which is why Achilles is so keen on killing him.[76] Penthesilea appears to play the same role: she leads her warrior-maidens and shows no fear. This does not mean she becomes battle-crazed and loses sight of what is important. She fights honourably, which is also recognised by the Greeks: "That is why the Greeks recognised in a short time Penthesilea's power and courage".[77] Furthermore, she also saves her allies during battle:

> She, after she had learned that Philemenis was captured by the Myrmidons, immediately hastened with her maidens in a bold manner against the Myrmidons. And she wounded and killed them with the blade of her sword, so that because of her the Myrmidons were forced to retreat. (...) King Philemenis, freed from Pyrrhus'

[74] Bumke 1989, 493.

[75] Guido, *History* f. 88ᵛ: Hector joins the battle when he hears of his brother Margariton's death. He also saves Polydamas from the Greeks.

[76] Guido, *History* f. 78ʳ. Keller (2008, 211) thinks it problematic from a political/imperial perspective that, when Hector falls, all hope is lost. For the Greeks, though, the death of one hero does not mean the end of the Greek empire. However, I contend that this does not reflect badly on Hector's character: he cannot be held personally responsible for the fact that he has to carry Troy's weight on his shoulders.

[77] Guido, *History* f. 103ᵛ: "Quare Greci breui hora cognoscunt Penthesilee potenciam et uirtutem."

hands, gave many thanks to Penthesilea, assuring her that his life had been saved because of her goodness.[78]

Everyone around her knows that she is the only hope for Troy: "for through her, king Priam believed to be relieved from his own sorrows".[79] She now bears Hector's burden.

Thirdly, it is striking how similarly the deaths of Penthesilea and the two Hectors that went before her are described: all three fights end in an unfair and gruesome manner. When Achilles wants to kill Hector, he at first does not stand a chance, since Hector is a more skilful warrior. Only when Hector carries his shield on his back and does not see Achilles coming, Achilles strikes:

> When Achilles noticed that Hector did not have before his chest the protection of his shield, he picked up a certain very fierce lance, and, while Hector did not notice, he made an attack upon him and wounded him fatally in the stomach so that he threw him from his horse, dead.[80]

Apparently, Achilles can achieve his goal through trickery alone. The same applies to the killing of Troilus. Achilles orders his men to surround Troilus and only then, when Troilus is heavily outnumbered and weakened, does Achilles dare to deal the final blow:

> Then Achilles arrived, who, after he had seen that Troilus' head was unprotected and destitute from all help of defence, made an attack on him, furious, and, after he had unsheathed his sword, heaping blow upon blow, he cruelly hacked off his head, throwing the head itself between the feet of the horses. Yet his body, which

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[78] Guido, *History* f. 104[r–v]: "Que, sibi postquam innotuit quod Philimenis a Mirmidonibus captus erat, statim cum puellis suis contra Mirmidones properat animose. Quos in ore gladii uulnerat et occidit, sic quod per eam Mirmidones retrocedere sunt coacti. (…) Rex Philimenis uero a Pirri manibus liberatus Penthesilee multiplices grates exhibuit, asserens sibi uitam eius beneficio conseruatam."

[79] Guido, *History* f. 103[v]: "cum per eam rex Priamus credat a suis doloribus respirare."

[80] Guido, *History* f. 88[r]: "Achilles dum persensit Hectorem ante pectus scuti sui subsidium non habere, accepta quadam lancea ualde forti, non aduertente Hectore, in ipsum irruit et letaliter uulnerauit in ventre sic quod eum mortuum deiecit ab equo."

he had intercepted with his own hands, he bound firmly to the tale of his horse, and he dragged it shamelessly and cruelly behind his horse through the whole army.[81]

After reporting this, Guido flies into a rage. He wonders how Homer could have praised Achilles. Achilles only overcame both Hector and Troilus through trickery.[82] It is clear that Achilles is the opposite of a good knight here. He is the embodiment of violent warfare and kills the two men who embody many qualities of the good knight. Penthesilea is killed not by Achilles, but by his son Pyrrhus, who takes after his father in many ways and becomes an *Achilles redivivus*.[83] Pyrrhus is also infuriated by his adversary and has fought with her on many occasions without ever being able to get the upper hand.[84] When Penthesilea wounds him, the Greeks surround her and break the straps of her helmet, which reminds the reader of Troilus' death. Then Pyrrhus attacks Penthesilea by surprise and cuts off her arm. This is still not enough, though, and Pyrrhus cuts her body into pieces:

> Then Pyrrhus in fury of his own animosity attacked Penthesilea, carrying the whole shaft within his body, not considering what might then befall him, while Penthesilea at that point did not have her helmet, because it had been completely shattered by the strength of those who had risen up against her. Yet Penthesilea, while she saw Pyrrhus coming quickly towards her, believed that she could strike

[81] Guido, *History* f. 99ᵛ: "Tunc superuenit Achilles, qui postquam uidit Troilum habentem caput inerme et omni defensionis auxilio destitutum, in eum irruit furibundus, et nudato ense ictus ictibus cumulando caput eius crudeliter amputauit, caput ipsum proiciendo inter pedes equorum. Corpus autem eius suis manibus interceptum ad caudam equi sui firmiter alligauit, et per totum exercitum inuerecunde post equum suum crudeliter ipsum traxit."

[82] Guido, *History* f. 99ᵛ–100ʳ. Further on in his work, the *History* says that Achilles killed Troilus through "proditorie": "treachery" (*History*, f. 126ᵛ).

[83] Although there are differences between father and son: for instance, Achilles' "amor" for Polyxena is the direct cause for his undoing, whereas Pyrrhus is not led by "amor" during the war. Only afterwards does his "amor" for Hermione lead to his death: *History* f. 126ʳ⁻ᵛ. "Amor" means Pyrrhus' death in the end, but it operates differently than in his father's case. This reading goes against Adler (1963, 27), who says that Pyrrhus is not affected by love at all.

[84] Guido, *History* f. 104ʳ–105ʳ.

him first. But Pyrrhus came more quickly to her in order to pierce her, and with the strength of his arms he hit her so gravely with his sword between the shoulder and the strap of her shield that through the violence of his blow he amputated her arm and severed it from the natural binding of her shoulder. In such a way Penthesilea fell headlong to the earth, dead. And Pyrrhus cut her whole body into pieces in satisfaction for his revenge.[85]

To add insult to injury, the Greeks initially refuse to return the queen's body to her people, throwing it into a pond with the intention of letting it rot.[86] Achilles maimed Troilus' body in a similar way, dragging it behind his horse's tail.[87] Thus, in all three cases, a good knight is attacked while at a clear disadvantage by an opponent who does everything a respectable knight should not do.

A.W. Kleinbaum also notes that Achilles' son Pyrrhus does not conform to the rules of chivalry when killing Penthesilea. However, Kleinbaum says that it was not necessary for Pyrrhus to behave chivalrous in this instant, because Penthesilea was not his social equal: "[w]ar is a man's game that women, even Amazons, are not permitted to play, and any female who stumbles into this masculine sphere may be exterminated without the slightest regard to justice and fairness".[88] However, I do not think that the *History* envisions Penthesilea's death a deserved one, as Kleinbaum argues. It is clear she is envisioned as a second (or actually third) Hector. Therefore, it is hard to argue that Penthesilea's death is a deserved punishment for gender transgression. Indeed, as has been shown, Penthesilea does not transgress any gender norms,

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[85] Guido, *History* f. 104ᵛ–105ʳ: "Pirrus uero in sue animositatis furore cum toto trunco quem gestabat in corpore, non considerans quid sibi inde contingeret, Penthesileam aggreditur, cum tunc Penthesilea casside sua careret, ex uiribus contra eam insurgencium tota quassata. Penthesilea autem cum uidit Pirrum contra se uelociter uenientem, prius credidit illum percutere. Sed Pirrus in percuciendo eam uelocius peruenit, et in uirtute brachiorum suorum cum ense suo sic grauiter eam percussit inter humerum et pennam scuti quod per uiolenciam ictus sui sibi brachium amputauit et ab eius humeri naturali iunctura disiunxit. Penthesilea itaque mortua preceps peruenit in terram. Et Pirrus in sue uindicte satisfaccionem totum corpus eius per frustra truncauit."

[86] Guido, *History* f. 105ᵛ.

[87] Guido, *History* f. 99ᵛ.

[88] Kleinbaum 1983, 60.

since she is never firmly planted in the realm of either the male or the female.[89]

The passage about her death follows Benoît's version for the most part.[90] What is noteworthy, though, is that the *Roman* says that Penthesilea forgot to strap on her helmet, which made her vulnerable for the Greeks' attack, whereas the *History* states that the straps of her helmet were broken by the great number of her adversaries.[91] In the *Roman*, Penthesilea made an error before meeting Pyrrhus on the battlefield; in the *History*, her chivalric conduct was without fault, but the odds were against her. The *History* portrays Penthesilea more positively than the *Roman* in this regard. Consequently, I assert that this episode does not portray Penthesilea, but her opponent, in a negative light.[92]

7.5 BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND BAD CHIVALRY

The confrontation between Penthesilea and Pyrrhus with its gruesome outcome underlines that war means the destruction of courtly chivalry, which is embodied here by a woman. In this regard, it is telling that Hector's death is not as savage as that of Troilus and Penthesilea. This, I think, is a clear indication that the Trojan war becomes more gruesome the longer it lasts, with many heroes falling into savagery. The fact that the Greeks desecrate Penthesilea's corpse and only return it after lengthy negotiations shows the Greeks' anger at being almost defeated by this extraordinary woman, but

[89] Contrast the *History's* description of her death with Dictys, *Journal of the Trojan War* IV.3: "In this manner the queen of the Amazons, having lost her troops with which she had come to Priam's aid, finally provided a sight worthy of her own morals" ("hoc modo Amazonum regina deletis copiis, quibuscum auxiliatum Priamo venerat, ad postremum ipsa spectaculum dignum moribus suis praebuit"). Dictys says here that she deserved to die gruesomely. He probably agreed with the Greeks, who want to desecrate Penthesilea's corpse "because she had dared to transgress the place of her nature and sex" ("quoniam naturae sexusque condicionem superare ausa esset": *Journal of the Trojan War* IV.3).

[90] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 24304–47.

[91] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 24305: "Penthesilea had not laced on her helmet" ("El n'aveit pas l'eaume lacié"); Guido, *History* f. 104ᵛ.

[92] It is interesting, though, that Pyrrhus actually pleads for a decent burial for his adversary in the end: Guido, *History* f. 105ᵛ. Although Pyrrhus at first sees Penthesilea's actions as a gender transgression, even he stands corrected in the end and manages to do the right thing when he is off the battlefield.

even more so their growing despair and frustration that the war is still not over. The Greeks seem to project their anger and violent behaviour on the corpse of someone who embodies their fears. Achilles' maiming of Troilus' body is clear proof as well that war, the longer it lasts, corrupts all and fuels excessive violence and rage. C.D. Benson sees Hector's death as a turning point. In his opinion, chivalry dies a quick death after Hector is gone.[93] Nonetheless, not all chivalry and hope are lost: the presence of a character like Penthesilea proves the opposite. It is interesting in this regard that Guido bestows the quality of "strennuitas", which I have translated as "chivalry", upon both Hector and the Amazons (Penthesilea included).

What we see here is not a battle of the sexes, but a battle between a right and wrong form of chivalry. This becomes all the more clear when comparing Penthesilea's death in Guido's *History* with Joseph of Exeter's *Ylias*, written around 1190. In the *Ylias*, Penthesilea does not look or act like a woman: she is a toughened warrior who does not care for her looks at all.[94] Although she acts and looks like a man, the *Ylias* takes care to underline that she actually belongs to the realm of the female (in regard to her anatomical body, but also her gender identity). When the narrator describes the confrontation between Pyrrhus and Penthesilea, he says that Mars supported Pyrrhus, Enyo Penthesilea: men support men and women support women.[95] The warriors then ride towards each other on horseback. Penthesilea misses, but Pyrrhus strikes the queen in her breast:

> (...) In such a way this powerful virago
> fell without her sword. And with so great a chastity of her sex
> she gathered her purple gowns and curved fabric around her legs
> and, much angered at fate, she grew weak [i.e. she died].[96]

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[93] Cf. Benson 1980, 29–30.
[94] Joseph of Exeter, *Ylias* VI.589–94.
[95] Joseph of Exeter, *Ylias* VI.635–6.
[96] Joseph of Exeter, *Ylias* VI.648–51: "(...) Sic imperiosa virago / degladiata ruit. Tanta et reverentia sexus, / sidonias in crura togas sinuosaque texta / colligit et multum fatis irata fatiscit."

Penthesilea does not die as a knight, but as a woman:[97] the last thing she does is making sure that she will not lie on the battlefield in an unseemly manner, as befits "the chastity of her sex". Penthesilea's final act on earth is a typically feminine one. Through this final action, the narrator places Penthesilea in her 'proper' place. In this light, Pyrrhus' act can be seen as a restoration of the gendered order. Indeed, as soon as Penthesilea dies, the Amazons become terrified, a terror which the narrator of the *Ylias* defines as typical for the female sex.[98] After Penthesilea's death, women start to act like women again. Furthermore, the fight that was Penthesilea's last is not an unfair one here. Penthesilea simply is no match for Pyrrhus, by which the *Ylias* probably means to say: a woman is no match for a man. That is why Pyrrhus kills Penthesilea upon their first encounter on the battlefield. If Penthesilea would have fought Pyrrhus more often, she would probably be assigned too much power and glory, which would be a troublesome thing for a woman. Everything has been done to ensure that Penthesilea's final combat is portrayed as a fair combat between the sexes, underlining that the Amazons were women both inside and out and actually no match for men.[99]

This 'rectification' of the gendered order is not visible in Guido's *History*. The *History* describes many encounters between Penthesilea and Pyrrhus, with the latter often having the worst of it. In doing so, the work grants Penthesilea glory for being able to hold out against Pyrrhus for so long: there is no sense of female weakness here. When she is eventually killed, it is not for her lack of fighting skills, but for Pyrrhus' lack of (good) chivalry: she does not get the chance to fight him fairly, being surrounded by many and taken by surprise. It is also interesting that Guido's Penthesilea does not change her behaviour at the moment of her death, showing feminine concern for her appearance. She fights and dies a true knight. When Penthesilea's followers see that she has died, they are much grieved, but they do not become frightened. Instead, their battle fury awakens and they slaughter many of the

[97] In my opinion, it is also significant that Pyrrhus strikes her in her breast: he targets her on a typically feminine part of her body, thereby showing that there is no place for women on the battlefield.

[98] Joseph of Exeter, *Ylias* VI.652–4.

[99] Kleinbaum (1983, 58–60) describes this passage as misogynistic. Indeed, the *Ylias* portrays women in general and the Amazons in particular negatively.

Myrmidons.[100] If it is true that Penthesilea's death incites them to show their true nature, as in the *Ylias*, then that nature is not a frightened, female one.

The *History* does not actively try to contain Penthesilea and her followers within the bounds of either the male or the female. That is why Penthesilea can go beyond the categories of gender, because of which she is able to address another (maybe more vital) issue: that of the right kind of chivalry and the impossibility of its survival amidst the chaos and ruin that war brings. Reading Penthesilea (and Hector) in such an allegorical manner fits the *History*'s broader aims: distancing chivalry from war and underlining the importance of peace.

7.6 WALKING THROUGH THE RUINS TO START ANEW

We have seen that the *History* plays with literary and clerical conventions, cracking open the conventional ideas about (gendered) chivalry with the help of the allegorical character of Penthesilea. The Amazonian queen does not serve as an example of gender transgression or as an(other) instance of a woman's bad behaviour. How could she, when she is neither wholly a man nor wholly a woman, but a character that walks in between the (conventional) realms of the knight and the lady? Penthesilea can even be seen in many ways as a *Hector redivivus*, thereby embodying many of the good sides of chivalry. She brings to the fore the virtues of virginity, bravery, love, and loyalty; virtues that constitute the right kind of chivalry. She dies – or even has to die – because the battlefield is not a place for a lady or for a knight, however virtuous they may be.

Penthesilea's death must not be interpreted, then, as a final reckoning for faulty gender behaviour, but as the tragedy that befalls all knights when they get sucked into the violence of war, where their good qualities can no longer flourish. By incorporating Penthesilea in the narrative, the *History* points the way to a new courtly kind of chivalry. Penthesilea and her women show that the traditional, violent side of chivalry is what makes chivalry as a whole so problematic. Hector also problematises this aspect of chivalric conduct, making clear that it is better to piously side with the clergy and sue for peace. The *History* does not disapprove of chivalry as a whole, but it does

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[100] Guido, *History* f. 105ʳ.

show that chivalry as it was then practiced is self-destructive and wrong.

Does this mean that Guido's work ends with the gloomy message that chivalry is dead, at least after Penthesilea? On the contrary: almost at the end of the *History*, there is a message of hope. The Trojan war is over and Guido describes how many of the main players fared afterwards. Andromache, whom Pyrrhus has taken with him after the war (together with her son Laomedon), bears Pyrrhus a child after his death. This child is named Achilleides and the *History* says the following about him:

> This Achilleides grew up, and he crowned his own brother Laomedon king of Thessaly, disregarding himself, to whom this kingdom reasonably belonged, and nonetheless out of love for his own brother he wanted and ordered that all the Trojans, who were held captive in Greece, received complete freedom.[101]

Benson describes this scene as a mockery of the wars that have been fought: "Looked at in this way, the *History* becomes the blackest of comedies, a story of total absurdity".[102] In my opinion, there is no reason to read this passage and, in extension, the whole work as negatively as Benson does. Instead, Achilleides and Laomedon represent the peaceful solution. Achilleides sets aside his pride and chooses to bury the enmities of the past. The two half-brothers represent all the good sides of chivalry (love, loyalty, etc.) and show that one can obtain glory and honour in a different, non-violent way.[103] The *History* itself is proof of this: Achilleides and Laomedon will now be remembered forever. They create a situation in which chivalry and other virtues can thrive, whereas Hector and Penthesilea, who also repre-

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[101] Guido, *History* f. 126ᵛ: "Hic Achilleides creuit, et Laumedontam fratrem suum Thessallie coronauit in regem, seipso postposito, ad quem regnum ipsum racionabiliter pertinebat, et nichilominus ipsius sui fratris amore uoluit et mandauit quod omnes Troiani qui capti erant in Grecia libertate plenaria potirentur."

[102] Benson 1980, 31.

[103] Adler (1963, 27–28) in his analysis of the *Roman* he reads the passage similar to this one also positively. He says that "militia" and "amor" are dissolved through "amicitia". I think the *History* was not so much focussed on "amicitia", but on reforming the common concepts of "militia" and "amor" as ingrained in chivalry to create a new kind of chivalry (where there is, indeed, practically no place anymore for "militia"). Keller (2008, 178 + 224) states that this solution can be reached, because the two

sented the good sides of chivalry, could not continue to live in the destructive environment they found themselves in. All in all, there is hope for a happy ending in which peace can be maintained. The *History* does not portend a gruesome end, but a new beginning.

brothers embrace the right kind of rulership. I agree, but I think that this right decision and good rule come forth from the right kind of chivalry that the two brothers practice here.

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Disenchanted Reception

Amazonian Diversities in Medieval Receptions of Myth

Ellen Söderblom Saarela

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If Atalanta had a womanly nature, I should recognize it from her upbringing. If she chose to remain a virgin, then I should see her confined to the women's quarters. But if she was not raised in the ways of women, then she also transposed her gender. For one's upbringing confirms one's gender, and for the different genders the ways of upbringing are correspondingly different.[1]

T HE TWELFTH-CENTURY BYZANTINE rhetorician Nikephoros Basilakes composed rhetorical exercises, or *progymnasmata*, for the Komnenian court in Constantinople. Not much is known about him nor the audience for which he wrote, but the collection of rhetorical exercises is dated to sometime in the late 1130s or early 1140s.[2] The

[1] Basilakes, *Progymnasmata* 27, 35–40: εἰ γυναικείαν Ἀταλάντη φύσιν εἶχεν, ἐκ τῆς τροφῆς ἐπιγνώσομαι· εἰ παρτενεύειν εἵλετο, καὶ θαλαμευομένην ὄψομαι. εἰ δὲ τὰ γυναικῶν οὐκ ἐτρέφετο, καὶ τὸ γένος παρήλλατε· βεβαιοῖ γὰρ τὸ γένος ἡ τροφὴ καὶ διαφόροις γένεσιν αἱ τροφαὶ παραπλησίως διάφοροι. For all Basilakes' citations in English, I have quoted Beneker and Gibson's translation (2016).

[2] Papaioannou 2007, 357. Regarding the potential audience, it is worth mentioning that, as in the West, in Byzantium courtly literature was composed also on the command of women patrons. During the twelfth century, we thus see an interest at the courts in literature among women. As in the West, in Constantinople literature was an occasional, social matter, read aloud for an audience. For women's patronage in Byzantium, see Hill 1999.

quotation above is drawn from a rhetorical refutation, which argues for the implausibility of the mythological Atalanta. It also presents an idea of gender as culturally constructed.

Atalanta, the huntress who rejects an upbringing in the women's quarters of civilization to live in the woods, cannot convince the narrator that she still has a womanly nature. According to the rhetorical exercise, one is not born, but rather becomes, woman, to use Simone de Beauvoir's classic phrase:[3]

> You posit that she is a girl, and I believe you. Then you should also restore to her an upbringing befitting a girl. As you are making her out to be now, female in nature, but male in behavior, then also her paradoxical upbringing throws her gender into doubt.[4]

The case of Basilakes' refutation of Atalanta illuminates how the twelfth-century reception of ancient myth can take shape as means to discuss philosophical matters more broadly. In the present volume, Baukje van den Berg shows how the Byzantine reception of tales of Troy tended to work as vehicles for allegorical interpretations, encouraging ethical reflection and moral education. She analyzes how, in Eusthathios of Thessalonike's Homeric commentaries, Athena should not be understood as a goddess, but more so as Achilles' readiness of mind, and that her descent from heaven represents his reason. In this way, we see how Trojan reception can function as removing the flesh and subjectivity of mythological (female) characters, to instead have them being an instrument serving more abstract purposes. Maybe this is what we see also in Basilakes' depictions of Atalanta. What is a woman? Is womanhood a universal and eternal essence, or is it, rather, a material condition tied to the female body in culture? Such questions, which have occupied feminists and gender theorists for years, and which are also

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[3] Simone de Beauvoir introduces the second volume of *The Second Sex* (1949), in which she goes through how womanhood is formed from the childhood onwards in culture (rather than it being an inherent essence). See Beauvoir 1949, 293.

[4] Basilakes, *Progymnasmata* 27, 41–45: παρθένον ὑποτίθης καὶ πείθομαι. ἀπόδος καὶ τροφὴν παρθένοις προσήκουσαν, ὡς νῦν γε πλάττεις φύσιν μὲν θήλειαν, τρόπον δὲ ἄρρενα. καὶ τὸ τῆς τροφῆς παράδοξον ἀμφίβολον ποιεῖται τὴν γένεσιν·

echoed in Beauvoir's mentioned phrase, can be seen as addressed already in Constantinople at the Komnenian court.

In this present volume, we see how the medieval reception of Troy takes different shapes and forms, that it can be re-actualized in many ways and for many purposes, in various languages and regions. Basilakes' refutation of Atalanta presents an idea of gender in Byzantine courtly literature. In the following, we shall look at how myth can be used to discuss ideas similar to this one, examining the genre of the Old French courtly romance, and more specifically, an adaptation of the tale of Trojan Aeneas' travel to Italy, during which he stays in Carthage in the presence of queen Dido.

> They saw Carthage, the city where Dido held fort. Lady Dido had the palace, and kept the city peaceful. Lady Dido had the country; no count or marquis would rule it better. Never had a county or a kingdom ever been ruled better by a woman.[5]

The *Roman d'Énéas* forms part of the first Old French romances, and thus forms part of an ongoing development of the genre. It dates to around 1160 and is preserved in nine manuscripts, dating from the beginning of the thirteenth to the end of the fourteenth centuries.[6] The tale is a translation, or perhaps rather a version, of Virgil's Latin epic the *Aeneid*. Together with Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie* and the anonymous *Roman de Thèbes*, these three are usually referred to as *romans d'antiquité*, which were vernacular versions of ancient tales, all dating around or shortly after mid-twelfth century.[7]

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[5] *Roman d'Énéas* 369–76: "Cartage virent, la cité / Dont Dido tint la fermeité : / Dame Dido tint lo palés / Et la cité an mult grant pés ; / Dame Dido tint lo païs, / Miaus nel tenist quens ne marchis ; / Unc ne fu mes par une feme / Mielz maintenu enor ne regne." The translations into English from this work are throughout my own.

[6] See the introduction to W. Besnardeau and F. Mora-Lebrun's edition (2018, 7). The edition is based on ms A, which dates to the beginning of the thirteenth century, sometime between 1201 and 1210 (see ibid.) and stretches to 10050 verses. For the present article, I always quote this edition, which also offers a modern French translation; I have made my own translations to English.

[7] We know little to nothing about the author of the *Roman d'Énéas*, but through its likely correlation with the other two mentioned *romans d'antiquité*, which have both been linked to Eleanor of Aquitaine's patronage, we have reason to believe that also

In this medieval version, a change has been made from the introduction of Dido in Virgil's ancient epic. Virgil's Dido enters into the Latin narrative after Aeneas has gazed upon a mural painting in Juno's temple in Carthage:

> The Amazons were there in their thousands with crescent shields and their leader Penthesilea in the middle of her army, ablaze with passion for war. There, showing her naked breast supported by a band of gold, was the warrior maiden, daring to clash with men in battle. While Trojan Aeneas stood gazing, rooted to the spot and lost in amazement at what he saw, queen Dido in all her beauty arrived at the temple with a great crowd of warriors around her.[8]

In the *Aeneid*, Aeneas sees Penthesileia, the Amazon warrior queen, and thereafter he sees the monarch in front of him. Also present is Dido, the powerful ruler who has denied herself of love and male company, so that she can steadily rule her own city, founded by herself. In the Old French poem, Énéas sees Carthage along with his men, and the poet-narrator introduces Dido into the story, seen in the quoted lines above. A bit later in the poem, Énéas and his men meet Dido: "In the castle beneath the tower, they found the queen in the big hall, accompanied by a big entourage".[9] A medieval castle and a courtly setting in Carthage, and no Amazon warrior queen. Can this removal, the absence of Trojan reception, be interpreted?[10] In the following, I intend to demonstrate how the erasure of this specific

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    this romance was commanded by her. Elizabeth Jeffreys further argues for the possibility of these three romances to be linked to Eleanor and Louis VII's experiences of the Second Crusade, when they visited Constantinople. See E. Jeffreys (1980), 455 and 459.

[8] Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.491–9: "Ducit Amazonidum lunatis agmina peltis / Penthesilea furens mediisque in milibus ardet, / aurea subnectens exsertae cingula mammae, / bellatrix, audetque viris concurrere virgo. / Haec dum Dardanio Aeneae miranda videntur, / dum stupet, obtutuque haeret defixus in uno, / regina ad templum, forma pulcherrima Dido, / incessit magna iuvenum stipante caterva." Translation by David West (1990) 2003.

[9] *Roman d'Énéas* 559–61: "Sus el chastel desoz la tor / Troverent ja el palleor / La raïne o tot grant barnage."

[10] To be sure, there are other elements and characters from ancient myth in the romance, not least the goddess Juno, for example. However, this article focuses only on Dido's Amazonian association, or rather lack thereof.

part of Trojan reception can be understood as tied to ideas of gender such as those articulated by Basilakes, mentioned above. In this way, I will argue that silent gaps of reception also speak.

8.1 PENTHESILEIA AND THE AMAZONS IN ANCIENT EXAMPLES

In Greek literature, the earliest reference to the Amazons is usually deemed to be found in Homer. In the *Iliad*, they are referred to as (*amazones*) *antianeirai* – "equals of men".[11] In other words, we see that in their first occurrence in Greek literature, the Amazons are defined both by their female sex *and* by their lack of femininity. Their separation from the feminine gender norm or expectation is what makes them who they are. The Amazon was a figure present in the collective consciousness of the Greeks, an important one, as Josine H. Blok argues.[12] One of the Amazons' functions can be understood as reflecting Greek identity through contrast. Accordingly, the Greek citizen would identify himself by acknowledging that he is *not* an Amazon. Page duBois describes the human subject in Greek culture to be based on a relation of defined differences: "The human Greek male, the subject of history and of the culture of the *polis*, is [...] at first simply not-animal, not-barbarian, not-female."[13] Thus, duBois describes the Greek subject to situate himself in relation to his negation.[14] One could say that through the Amazon's distinction from other women, she becomes a rival of the Greek male warrior. Her likeness to him, *antianeira* as it were, makes her worth fighting. As she makes man able to reflect himself in her, she becomes a threat that needs to be killed.

Let's now move on to the specific case of Virgil's *Aeneid*, and more specifically to Dido's link to the Amazon.[15] Having arrived in Carthage, Aeneas gazes upon a mural painting in Juno's temple, and the last object that Aeneas

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[11] See Blok 1994, 146.

[12] Blok 1994, 1.

[13] duBois 1991, 4.

[14] duBois 1991, 6.

[15] Dido has also been associated with other mythological figures, not least Diana; see Duclos 1969; Pach Wilhelm 1987; Polk 1996; Fratantuono 2006. For comparisons between Dido and Homer's Nausicaa, see Couch 1942, and Starr 2009, who further also compares Dido with Penelope. In this article focus is put on the Amazon, while acknowledging the many mythological connotations Dido has.

sees before seeing Dido is none other than Penthesileia, the Amazon queen (see quotation above).

Dido's connection to Penthesileia is thus made through the narrative's way of focalizing Aeneas' gaze. It is in his perspective that the two queens are connected. Hence, we can arguably speak here of the monarch's equality to man, of her likeness with the male subject and her way of reflecting him that dooms Dido to her tragic fate already here, in the narration of Aeneas' gaze's wandering from the piece of art to the human flesh.

Dido's connection to the Amazon goes beyond physical stature. Her masculine office, ruling her city as a monarch, makes her unfeminine, or, "equal of man". Charles Segal argued that Dido's agency in the poem should be interpreted through the lens of the Penthesileia alignment.[16] However, as the love tale between her and Aeneas develops and Dido devotes herself to love at the cost of her political duties, her Amazonian resemblance appears to become replaced with a more 'traditional' femininity. As Dido chooses to be with Aeneas, she goes through a shift from masculine to feminine roles, Segal argued.[17]

In Dido's case, it is divine will that conducts her towards erotic desire for Aeneas and maternal love; her fate appears to end up in a traditional feminine role. Grace Starry West referred to the androgyny in Dido's character as "a tragic conflict in her soul."[18] Dido can be described as taking on a "properly masculine" destiny. After having been married to Sychaeus as a young girl, Starry West wrote, "upon his death she becomes a *regina* with full responsibility for her city."[19] With her death, Dido is returned to Sychaeus: "She is no longer political and masculine but wifely and feminine."[20] Although she attempts to live a masculine life, denying the role as wife and mother, she cannot escape her fate. Penthesileia or not – Dido cannot deny her cultural feminine identity, and dies trying. Seen in this way, Virgil's Dido can be said to represent a view of gender as being an essence, as opposed to the view noted in Basilakes' rhetorical exercise, where gender rather seems so be

[16] Segal 1990, 4.
[17] Segal 1990, 7.
[18] Starry West 1980, 315.
[19] Starry West 1980, 317.
[20] Starry West 1980, 317.

socially constructed. Ancient Dido cannot escape the determinism inherent in her sex. In other words, that gaze that introduced Dido to the narrative, Aeneas' eyes on her after having seen Penthesileia in art, appear to work as a prolepsis towards the conflict that Dido shall experience; her future desire to build Carthage together with her beloved will be put to conflict with Aeneas' inability to reflect himself as a male subject faced with the woman in which he sees not his contrast, the Other, so-to-speak, but his similarity, the Amazon. The threat against gender norms that she embodies makes her worthy of fighting. Achilles killed Penthesileia in war whereas Aeneas can be understood as, however unwillingly or indirectly, doing so through love.

Paul Allen Miller categorizes Dido with Camilla, Amata and Penthesileia.[21] In relation to Penthesileia and Camilla, Miller puts Dido in the middle, defining her as the representation of "a mid-point between future and past," being "both the transition which unites and gives sense to the two Amazon episodes" in the *Aeneid*.[22] Dido is positioned as the border between two warrior women in the narrative; one that was vanquished by a male warrior, and one that shall be killed as well, by another male warrior. Dido is aligned with Penthesileia through the visual association mentioned above, and she impresses her people and Aeneas through her luxury, stature and political authority.[23] As do the Amazons, Dido has chosen a life in separation from men, which constitutes the foundation of her power. Accordingly, Dido could be viewed as a 'self-made Amazon'; she rejects living according to expectations of femininity, thus she can be described as rebelling against the embodied gender role to which she is culturally bound, so that she can rule Carthage. The prolepsis in the portrayal of Penthesileia, who died by Achilles' sword, lets us know from the first sight of Dido that the Carthaginian queen will end up dead, outdone by a man who loves her. The independence and power that she demonstrates is in other words unstable. Unlike in the case of Aeneas, Dido's destiny is not fixed by the gods, but rather by her own, human self. Dido's Amazon connection can thus be interpreted as an essential cause of her tragedy. Penthesileia can arguably be viewed as a symbol

[21] Miller 1989, 51.
[22] Miller 1989, 53.
[23] Regarding characterization via metaphor and association in ancient literature (focusing on the Greek novels), see De Temmerman 2014, 35.

for how gender is an essence rather than socially constructed. The unhappy tale of Penthesileia dooms Dido to an inherent defeat by that heterosexual, patriarchal culture from which she is at first emancipated. In this way, myth can be understood as forming a central role in the characterization of Virgil's Dido. The mythological associations carry meaning to the reader's understanding of the characters' traits, motivations and destinies.

Considering the significance of Dido's connection with Penthesileia, the removal of the Amazon in the Old French version of the *Aeneid* is noteworthy. Dido is still doomed, but in this courtly version, her death is de-mythologized, explained through the social stigma of her conduct within her courtly culture. In the following, I will thus argue that the de-mythologization in this twelfth-century romance opens up for new possibilities for female characterization, which may be interpreted as representing ideas on gender that could have been circulating.

8.2 PENTHESILEIA, A 'STRONG WOMAN' IN THE *ROMAN DE TROIE*

As was mentioned above, in the Old French anonymous *Roman d'Énéas*, the association between Dido and Penthesileia has been removed from the narrative. However, I would like to argue that this *lack* of mythological reception can be food for interpretation; what is the meaning of this erasure and how does it impact our interpretation of the text? How does reception thus, in this case at least, relate to medieval views on gender?

Twelfth-century Old French romance is a literature composed in courtly environments, often for women patrons, and read aloud in social contexts.[24] We should thus understand the narratives as forming part of social gatherings, encouraging reactions, input and discussion from their audiences. The

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[24] Regarding women's participation in the creations of courtly romance, see Ferrante (1997) and Green (2007) who both demonstrate and discuss ways of understanding courtly romance as made in what we could call a collaborative process, not merely in the sense that literature was composed through (often women's) patronage, but also in the sense that the reading's social setting encouraged input and discussions from the audiences, which further then formed an essential part of the meaning-making of the literary work (this last point is mainly made by Green who coins this way of literary participation as 'sponsorship').

courtly romance could accordingly be understood as a collaborative work, made in dialogue with an audience at a reading occasion.

We could arguably assume that the removal of the Amazonian association from the *Roman d'Énéas'* Dido ought not be explained by a lack of knowledge of the Amazons or Penthesileia among the courtly audience. Penthesileia is given considerable length in another of the *romans d'antiquités*, Benoît's *Roman de Troie*.

Dealing with pagan myth and deities seems to have been a complicated task in medieval reception. As A. Sophie Schoess argues in her contribution to this volume, to claim connections to Latin and Greek heritage was on the one hand important and made through reception of Trojan narratives. On the other hand, however, it was also important to separate pagan idolatry from Christian religion.[25] Benoît, Schoess writes, tends to remove pagan gods from the narratives to some extent (while keeping aspects of religious practice, such as temples and images). Hence, what to include and exclude from myth was something for every poet to decide. The Amazons and Penthesileia were not omitted from the *Roman de Troie*, so what purpose did they serve?

In the *Roman de Troie*, the Amazons can be understood as incorporating the virtues deemed as particular to good femininity, as opposed to bad, i.e., general, femininity. In the romance, the poet-narrator describes the flaws in women in terms of unreliability.[26] He argues that women's hearts are inconsistent, that their emotions change rapidly:

> If she is in pain, she will find joy in a man whom she is yet to know. Soon she will have turned her love [to someone else], soon she will be comforted again. A woman is never truly at a loss; when she has made her choice, it does not take long for her to end her laments. Pain does not last long in a woman; she cries in one eye and laughs in the other. She changes her heart very quickly, also the somewhat wise one is pretty foolish. After having loved someone for seven years, she forgets him after three days. Never has any woman ever known pain. [...] Never will they admit that

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[25] See chapter 2 "Pagan Idols and Christian Anxiety in Medieval Troy Narratives".

[26] Regarding this view of women in a larger medieval context and its tradition, see Bloch's study (1991) on misogyny in the Middle Ages.

they have acted wrongly, of all their follies this is the worst. He who confines and believes in her, deceives himself.[27]

Although the poet-narrator accuses women of being unreliable with changing hearts, some verses further down, he describes what marks so-called strong women. He reads Salomon and describes what constitutes a strong woman:

Salomon, who had such wise knowledge, says in his text: "He who can find a strong woman, the Lord must praise." He called her strong, knowing many of the weaknesses [of women]. Strong is she who defends herself, who does not yield to the folly in her heart. Combining beauty with chastity is, it seems to me, very difficult. Below the Sky there is nothing as rare as that. Quite often, the majority of the women succumb to their wooers' tastelessness. It is an extraordinary occasion when a woman, with whom one has the occasion to talk, makes resistance. He who finds a woman beautiful and loyal cannot hold her less dear than he would the angels in the Sky. Neither precious stones nor fine gold can be compared to this treasure.[28]

The two descriptions of women that are presented by the poet-narrator of the *Roman de Troie* both depict a view of what a woman *should be*, as well as what she *is not*: a strong woman does not yield to the weakness of temp-

[27] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 13434–56: "S'el a hui duel, el ravra joie / De tiel qui onc ne la vit jor ; / Tost i avra torné s'amor, / Tost se sera reconfortee. / Femme n'iert ja trop esgaree : / Por ce qu'ele truist o choisir, / Poi durent puis li suen sospir. / A femme dure duels petit, / A un oil plore, a l'autre rit. / Molt müent tost li lor corage, / Assez est fole la plus sage : / Quant qu'el a en set anz amé, / A ele en treis jorz oblïé. / Onc nule ne sot duel aveir. [...] / Que l'on ja blasmer les en deive. / Ja jor ne quideront mesfere. / Des folies est ce la meire. / Qui s'i atent ne qui s' creit, / Sei meïsme vent e deceit." Translations into English of this work are throughout my own.

[28] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 13471–91: "Salemon dit en son escrit, / Cil qui tant ot saive esperit : / 'Qui fort femme porreit trover, / Le Criator devreit löer.' / Fort l'apele por les feblors / Qu'il sot et conut en plusors. / Forz est cele qui se desfent / Que fols corages ne a prent. / Biautez e chasteez esnenble / Est molt griés chose, ce me senble : / Soz ciel n'a rien tant coveitee. / Assez avient mainte fiee / Que par l'ennui des proieors / En sunt conquises les plusors : / Merveille est cum riens se desfent / A qui l'on puet parler sovent. / Qui la trueve bele e leial, / Un des angeles esperital / Ne deit estre plus cher tenuz : / Chieres pieres ne or moluz / N'est a ces thesor conparez."

tation, but rather defends herself from others' threat against her. A weak woman, then, is guided by a changing heart, lacks constancy, is unreliable. A strong woman, who is at once beautiful and chaste, is a rare gem. To believe in a woman's loyalty is, the poet-narrator lets us know, foolish.

In this context of defining female strength and virtue, the Amazon fits rather perfectly. In the *Roman de Troie*, the Amazons are introduced as separatist women living far away in the East. Their land is big and wealthy, they themselves are beautiful and richly dressed. During three months, they meet men of their valor and reproduce. The daughters they keep with them, the sons they let grow up in the patriarchal world in which they take no part. But many of the women never reproduce, instead they remain virgins. If a man enters the land of the Amazons, he is cut to pieces.[29] The women who choose to not reproduce devote themselves to being warriors:

> Of these there are many who shall never in their lives be addressed by any man. They shall never lose their virginities. They carry arms, they are very brave, daring and apt to fight. And everywhere they are being praised.[30]

It is the challenging defense against men that defines women's strength, if we believe the *Roman de Troie*. In the romance, the Amazon queen Penthesileia can be described as personifying this view of female strength. Being an Amazon, she challenges men's dominance and rejects the cultural feminine role according to gender norms. Further, as she is told about Hector's death, her emotions of grief are described as profound and sincere:

> When the news reached Penthesileia she was struck with pain; that Hector was dead burdened heavily on her. Such great torment was manifest in her expression that no one's grief prior to hers could ever compare.[31]

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[29] See *Roman de Troie,* 23302–56.

[30] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 23347–53: "D'eles i a molt grant partie / Que ja a nul jor de lor vie / Ne seront d'omes adesees / Ne ja n'erent despucelees. / Armes portent, molt sunt vaillanz / E ardies e cumbatanz, / E en toz lués en sunt preisees."

[31] Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 23382–7: "Quant noncié fu Panteselee / La dolorose destinee, / Qu'Ector ert morz, molt l'en pesa : / Un si fet duel en demena / Que rien ne vit ainc si grant faire."

As the Amazon queen is re-actualized in the Old French romance, thus, we see that she incorporates strength and virtue, at the same time as she lacks that which is deemed bad in women. She is warlike, rejects men's erotic advancements, and has a reliable, steady heart. Her emotion does not change rapidly. Her grief for a dead man is sincere. Penthesileia, in the courtly twelfth century, appears as an admirable woman, an exception to the rule, according to which women are weak and insincere. And yet, it is worth acknowledging how the idea of Penthesileia is negotiated in medieval reception, which then relates to ideas of gender in courtly culture of chivalry. Earlier in this volume, Hilke Hoogenboom demonstrates this ongoing elaboration in literature by comparing Benoît's representation of the Amazon queen with Guido delle Colonne's one a century later. The use of the Amazon, and Penthesileia specifically, offer the possibility to define not only what a woman is, but also how the male subject is fashioned through his relation to the Other, the woman. As we saw above, the Amazon functioned as a mirror to the Greek male subject during Antiquity, but as she is re-actualized in medieval reception, her ways of representation may shift, as may her meaning. Nevertheless, her function as a surface on which gender can be negotiated remains. Hoogenboom analyzes the medieval Amazon through Judith Butler's theory of gender as performance; in this sense, the gender of the Amazon is interpreted through her actions, rather than her corporeality. And indeed, as Hoogenboom shows in the example of Guido, Penthesileia is at once a *uirgo* and full of desire, she is femininely dressed in white, and as chivalrous as the bravest knight.[32] If we then move on to the *Roman d'Énéas*, we shall see that, rather than presenting gender as performative, Dido can be interpreted as representing an understanding of the sexes through its corporeal materiality; that regardless of her potential transgressive performance, she cannot escape her gendered identity.

In her study on the Dido tradition (1994), Marilynn Desmond writes that the poet of this medieval version of Virgil's tale, more generally, "approaches the plot of the *Aeneid* as though it were a series of questions to which the vernacular text provides explanatory answers; in that respect, the

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[32] See chapter 7 "Femme Fatale: Penthesileia and the Last Stand of Chivalry in Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Destructionis Troiae*".

narrative of the *Roman d'Énéas* implicitly provides both text and commentary."[33] Rather than being a verbatim translation, the medieval narrative comments and offers new perspectives. Considering how the Amazons, and Penthesileia specifically, are present and described in the *Roman de Troie*, the reference could be assumed as known to the audience also of the *Roman d'Énéas*. Rather than, thus, interpreting the removal of Penthesileia in this adaptation of Virgil as due to lack of mythological knowledge, we could see it as forming part of this mentioned ongoing negotiating of gender views, which is elaborated through medieval receptions of Troy. What comment does the poem make in its removal of Penthesileia?

8.3 DIDO'S EMOTIONS TRAPPED IN COURTLY CULTURE

In his analyses of Byzantine historiography (John Malalas) and allegory (John Tzetzes) in this volume, Adam Goldwyn shows how Trojan reception appears to, if not unwrite powerful mythological women altogether from tradition by simply omitting them, then rationalize them through disenchantment, which diminishes their power.[34] Accordingly, de-mythologization, as it were, can be understood as a tool for misogyny, whose function is to minimize the importance of women in (literary) history, if not erase them altogether. In the following, I intend to propose a different function for the removing of myth in medieval reception, in the case of Dido in the *Roman d'Énéas*. Here, her tragedy can be viewed as rationalized, explained by the social consequences that she suffers by prioritizing her love and desire over courtly norms and political expectations. However, I would like to suggest that rather than this rationalization would diminish Dido's importance, it adds a materialist dimension to the tale of Dido, as well as it humanizes the mythological figure into a female subject who faces earthly conditions, to which perhaps even a courtly audience (of women or not) could relate.

In the *Roman d'Énéas*, Dido's passionate desire is trapped within her courtly culture, which results in frustration. Énéas tells Dido about his long journey and misfortune before reaching her shores, and she listens, but not

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[33] Desmond 1994, 105.

[34] See chapter 6 "The Sexual Politics of Myth: Rewriting and Unwriting Women in Byzantine Accounts of War".

fully focused; she looks at him, but love keeps picking on her. She sighs and blushes.[35] Dido has his bed arranged. She follows him to his chamber, and Énéas, who is very tired, falls asleep. Dido, however, cannot get herself to leave him on his bed, and so four counts conduct her to her own bedroom, where, in turn, hundred esteemed ladies await her:

> She looked at him with tenderness, as Cupid tormented her. Cupid picks on her, Cupid incites her; she sighs repeatedly and changes color. When it was time to go to sleep, she had his bed arranged. She accompanied him to the bedroom where the beds were garnished with beautiful covers and drapes. He [Énéas] laid himself down, being exhausted. The queen assisted him, she could not get herself to leave. Four counts brought her with them to her bedroom, she went in. A hundred worthy damsels were there, daughters of counts and kings. Not one without a task; they served the queen as she went to bed.[36]

Thus, Dido's desire for Énéas is put inside a courtly infrastructure over which she rules and under which she is served but also, at the same time, supervised. It appears that Dido must not pursue her desire, as she seems to be in lack of liberty to do so within the courtly structure. As Dido then tries to sleep in her quiet bedroom, the narrative describes in a lengthy scene the corporeal nature of her desire. She cannot sleep, but breathes heavily, turns from one side to the other, and she is filled with agitation and torment. Dido's erotic excitement follows her into her sleep. In her fantasies, to which the audience is given entrance, Dido kisses her pillow and embraces her quilt, confusing it for her beloved in her dozed off state:

[35] For the ways of narrating desire in this physical form as it is expressed in Trojan reception, see Lilli Hölzlhammer's chapter 3 in this volume, "Narrating and Translating Medea in Medieval Romances: Narrative Strategies in Greek, medieval Latin, and Middle High German Translations of the *Roman de Troie*".

[36] *Roman d'Énéas* 1219–36: "El lo regardoit par dolçor / Si com la destreignot Amor ; / Amor la point, Amor l'argüe, / Sovant sospire et color mue. / Quant il fu termes the colchier, / El fait les liz aparoillier ; / An la chanbre l'an a mené / Ou li lit furent apresté / De covertors et de buens dras. / Cil s'est colchiez, qui toz ert las ; / La raïne fu au covrir, / A grant poine s'an pot partir. / Quatre conte l'an ont menee / An sa chanbre, s'an est antree. / .C. donzelles i ot de prois, / Filles de contes et de rois ; / N'i ot nule ne fust meschine : / Al cochier servent la raïne."

When the bedroom turned quiet, Dido could not forget him, for whom the god of love had put her in such a ruse. She begins to think about him, in her heart she starts to remember his face, his body, his stature, his words, his way of speaking, the battles of which he had told her. She could not sleep for anything. She twisted and turned repeatedly, she breathes heavily, sighs and moans; she struggles and suffers, trembles, shivers and flinches. Her heart fails her and is gone. The lady suffers a great torture. And she is just about to lose consciousness, she thinks of herself together with him, she sees herself holding him between her arms. She does not know how to hide or conceal her love. She embraces her quilt, but finds not comfort or love. A thousand times she kisses her pillow, for love of the knight. She believes him, who is absent, to be present in her bed. He was not there at all, he was elsewhere! She speaks to him as if he heard her, she seeks for him in her bed with her hand. As she cannot find him, she pounds herself with pangs. She cries and feels great pain. Her tears make her sheets wet. The queen keeps turning – first to her stomach, and then to her back. She cannot find peace, she suffers greatly, she experiences great pain and sadness through the night.[37]

The narrative depicts Dido in a setting that appears far from the unattainable grandeur and stature that otherwise suits a monarch. Rather, we find her in a scene to which it would have been easier to relate on a mere material level; in the dark of the night, Dido appears as a woman like any other. As her bedroom has now become quiet after having been filled with the grand company of counts and ladies, the text describes Dido's emotions and

[37] *Roman d'Énéas*, 1237–74 : "Quant la chanbre fu aserie, / Dame Dido pas ne oblie / Celui por cui li dex d'amor / L'avoit ja mise an grant freor. / De lui comance a penser, / en son corage a recorder / Son vis, sun cors et sa faiture, / Ses diz, ses faiz, sa parleüre, / Les batailles que il li dist. / Ne fust por rien qu'ele dormist : / Tornot et retornot sovant, / Ele se pasme et s'estant, / Sofle, sospire et baaille, / Molt se demeine et travaille, / Tranble, fremist et si tressalt, / Li cuers li mant et se li falt. / Molt est la dame mal baillie ; / Et quant ce est qu'ele s'oblie, / Ansanble lui guide gesir, / Antre ses braz lo quide estraindre : / Ne set s'amor covrir ne foindre. / Ele acole son covertor, / Confort n'i trove ne amor ; / .M. foiz baise son oreillier / Anpor l'amor au chevalier, / Cuide que cil qui ert absenz / Anz an son lit li furst presenz ; / N'an i a mie, aillors estoit ! / Parolle o lui com s'el l'ooit, / An sun lit le taste et quiert ; / Quant nel trove, des poinz se fiert. / Ele plore et fait grant duel, / Des larmes moillent si linçuel ; / Molt se detorne la raïne, / Primes adanz et puis sovine. / Ne puet garir, molt se demeine, / Molt traist la nuit et mal et poine."

fantasies. The audience can thus picture Dido alone with her arms around her quilt. In the solitude of her bed, we are given access to Dido's emotions as well as her physical, erotic desire, in which she indulges. In contrast to the courtly infrastructure that prevents her from pursuing her desire with Énéas, here, in private, Dido lets out that which, in public, she must hide.

Dido and Énéas are, nevertheless, united also beyond Dido's fantasies, in reality. Fama, the goddess of rumor, circulates in Virgil's epic, talking about how Dido and Aeneas have changed their respective devotions to their political missions, to instead devote themselves to their lust for each other. In the courtly romance, the rumor that is spreading says that Dido has been dishonored by Énéas. There has been a shift of focus in the medieval text; now, the focus centers around the shame imposed on Dido for having had her honor violated. Now, the same sort of collective, courtly supervision that was seen when Dido was conducted to her bedroom and prepared for bed, turns against her, rather than serves her. The rumor is described as having "a thousand mouths with which to talk, a thousand eyes, a thousand wings with which to fly, a thousand ears with which to hear if perhaps there is something scandalous to spread out".[38] Dido lives under social surveillance. Her desire is seen through the light of the culture in which she lives and, as the narrative makes clear, it is not allowed.

In the *Roman d'Énéas*, the rumor is described as a phenomenon by the poet-narrator in critical terms, as something that makes one believe in false matters. Further, "based on a hint of truth it tells such lies that it appears as a dream, and it adds so much to the story, that whatever there was that was true is no more".[39] The poet-narrator then continues by explaining the process of the rumor, stating that the rumor begins by being mild and discreet, then it raises its voice, announcing the story louder and louder, then, as the story is out, it speaks in all openness.

The rumor not only puts Dido and Énéas to shame for their erotic adventures, but further, it ruins Dido's status on the marriage market in a wider perspective:

[38] *Roman d'Énéas* 1555–9: ".M. boches a dont al parolle / .M. ielz, .M. eles don't al vole, / .M. oroilles dont ele oriole / Se ele orroit nule mervoille / Qu'ele peüst avant noncier."

[39] *Roman d'Énéas* 151569–72: "D'un po de voir dit tant mençonge/ Qu'il resanble que ce soit songe, / Et tant lo vait muntepliant / N'i a de voir ne tant ne quant".

The lady was greatly dishonored; all over Libya, her name was disgraced. As the barons, dukes, princes and counts were told of the affair — all those whom she had rejected in the past — were offended, since she had chosen a man of lower standard than them, a man who was neither count or king.[40]

Dido's shame is contextualized within the courtly aristocracy. Her behavior is considered shameful, and as a result she loses all of her status. The narrator then, after having explained the nature and function of the rumor, continues to retell that which the offended courtly men say among themselves. A man is foolish for believing a woman's word, they say, and "he [who believes a woman's word] takes her, who is senseless, for being wise".[41] As Hoogenboom shows, Penthesileia in Benoît's romance is valued for being both a good lover and a good knight.[42] The Amazon's distance from the feminine gender role opens up the possibility for her to be praised for the same values as those for which male knights would be praised. In Dido's case here, however, her Amazon connection is gone and so is her possibility to act according to masculine standards.

This romance is not the only case of the medieval reception of Virgil that omitting mythological traits which results in turning Dido into a more relatable subject. As Susannah L. Wright demonstrates, Juno is omitted from impacting the occurrence of Dido and Aeneas' hunting scene in the Middle Irish *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, dated to the twelfth or eleventh century. Instead, the event is narrated as resulting organically, as being an idea that is developed in the mind of Dido.[43] In the *Imtheachta Aeniasa* and the *Roman d'Énéas*, we see a development of Dido towards conducting herself according to her own agency and desire, not mainly governed by a mythological heritage, but rather by her own mind.

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[40] *Roman d'Énéas* 1591–600: "Molt ert la dame defamee / Par tote Libe la contree, / An mal on essaucié son non. / Quant l'oënt dire li baron, / Li duc, li prince, li contor / Qu'ainçois ne volt prendre a segnor, / Molt se tienent por vergondez, / Qu'eles les a toz revelez / Por un home de plus bas prois, / Qui ne estoit ne cuens ne rois."

[41] *Roman d'Énéas* 1604: "Tel tient l'en sage qui est fole."

[42] See chapter 7.

[43] See chapter 4 "Troy Translated, Troy Transformed: Rewriting the *Aeneid* in Medieval Ireland".

Not only has Dido been de-mythologized in the *Roman d'Énéas* through the removal of Penthesileia, but the courtly setting of the story writes forth a new sort of social pressure, narrated as part of the courtly culture that Dido lives in. The rumor is explained within this social context, as a collective set of mouths and eyes that dishonor Dido. The effects of the social shame that Dido then suffers are seen through the light of the marriage market; honorable men no longer see her as dignified enough for them to marry, they conclude among themselves, stating that: "He who trusts a woman is a fool!".[44] Dido is thus deemed an unreliable woman, not unlike how the poet-narrator describes the female sex in the *Roman de Troie*. The *Roman d'Énéas'* Dido, thus, can be interpreted as a literary representation of a woman who is affected by accusations against women in literature, not unlike that which we saw above in the case of Benoît's *Roman de Troie*.

As she does in Virgil's *Aeneid*, this medieval Dido also dies as her beloved's journey continues without her. Unlike the tragedy inherent in Virgil's Dido's mythological association to Penthesileia, however, we could hardly explain this romance's Dido's death as being caused by such an inherent mythological defeat. Rather, the courtly Dido's death can be explained in cultural terms; she acted inappropriately for a courtly lady and, thus, suffers social punishment. This causal explanation to Dido's sufferings can be compared to medieval receptions of Medea, as Lilli Hölzlhammer shows in her contribution to this volume. As we see in Konrad's von Würzburg *Trojanerkrieg*, Medea remains tied to her fate of being struck by love's force, and cannot escape it although she is aware of her awaiting tragedy. Medea's fate is long since written, and is not open to reform: the poet knows it, the audience knows it, even Medea knows it.[45] The determinism of her myth is inherent to her character. Indeed, Dido's tragedy also lies ahead: anyone familiar with Virgil's tale of Aeneas knows that Dido is not destined to follow him on his journey. And yet, as it is told in this Old French romance, Dido's story begins by establishing her as a courtly lady, a queen of the world as the audience knows it, rather than as someone of another, mythological distant past.

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[44] *Roman d'Énéas* 1612: "Fox est qui an fame se fie!"
[45] See chapter 3.

The conflict in which Dido finds herself is contextual; social matters stand in the way of the medieval female character's expressions of love. Medieval Dido feels desire, without her desires ever being described as put into conflict with her inner or true identity as chaste and constant, or a view of what makes a woman 'strong' defined by men. It is not a matter of inner conflict that ruins Dido in the courtly romance; it is not her desire in conflict with Amazonian traits that challenge one another introspectively. In this regard, Dido's story is more in the open; mythological determinism to her character is replaced with the potential of the unknown. In other words, Dido does not appear unconditionally tied to any limitations due to her sex, but rather, her identity forms part of her social context. It seems that this suggested de-mythologization or disenchantment results in a humanization of medieval Dido's character, making her a desiring subject in a relatable social setting. Dido's new tragedy can be described as her being a desiring subject in a culture in which her subjectivity finds no room to be expressed. The limits to Dido's liberties and her predestined fate to die as Énéas' journey continues are unconditionally tied to her story, but not to her character. Without her inherent mythological association to the Amazons, she appears as a subject in the world, a character that is affected, not by myth, but by earthly conditions.

Dido's death in the *Roman d'Énéas* takes place in a bedroom, where she has had placed all her gifts from Énéas. She takes the sword that he once handed her, not knowing that she would turn it against her own chest:

> In the bedroom all alone; there is no one there to keep her from the insanity that she wants to pursue as she draws the Trojan's sword. When he gave it to her, he hardly thought that it would be the cause of her death. And she holds the sword, wholly naked, and she presses it against her chest. Dido then jumps into the fire that she has had her sister prepare, and then lays herself down on her stomach in the bed, on the sheets that the Trojan once gave her. She wallows and rolls around in her blood.[46]

[46] *Roman d'Énéas* 2035–47: "En la chanbre est tot solement ; / N'i a qui li destort noiant / La descerie qu'el velt faire, / De l'espee al Troien traire : / Quant li dona, ne quida mie / Par li deüst perdre la vie. / Et tint l'espee tote nue, / Soz la memelle s'est ferue. / O tot lo cop salt anz el ré / Que sa suer li ot apresté : / El lit desor les garnemenz / Al Troïen se colche adanz, / El sanc se voltre et demoine."

Dido's suicide can be interpreted as commenting on the consequences of her previous pursuit of her sexuality. She directs his sword, a symbol of the phallus, against her own chest, and then covers his sheets with her blood. Dido's death can thus be understood as the death of her sexuality, and, hence, her subjectivity. The sheets, she says, "formed the beginning of death and destruction for me".[47] Unable to live as a free subject with room for her sexuality, Dido does not seem to see the possibility of continuing to live at all.

In this sense, the removal of mythological reception, so to speak, also carries meaning. Dido's tragic fate lives on through the ages, but the explanations of it can be said to shift along with her speaking to new audiences in different times and settings, which we saw also in the case of Medea in Hölzlhammer's analysis, where her and Jason's tale has transformed into fitting a courtly structure: Jason has become a vassal in Benoît's *Roman de Troie*, and in *Trojanerkrieg* the vassal identity has been omitted, but the courtliness to their story remains.[48] Could it have been possible for a women-audience to mirror themselves in a de-mythologized Dido? Could they have seen themselves in her conflict with unfavorable conditions in culture and social shame caused by men's badmouthing rumors? And perhaps then also in her way of letting out her emotions in the dark solitude, when there is nobody around to condemn her for them? In her final moment, Dido returns to her private solitude where she once let out her emotions, in the dark confinement of a quiet bedroom. From having first held on to her pillow she now throws herself down on the sheets, staining his gifts with her blood. Dido's fate can thus be interpreted as equally determined as it was when she was associated to Penthesileia's defeat in Virgil's epic, but with the causality of which modified. Here she is doomed by courtly conditions that deprive her of pursuing her sexuality and, thus, subjectivity.

8.4 ONE IS NOT BORN MYTH, BUT RATHER REWRITES IT

> As soon as a female infant is born, she is a woman; she sees the light of day and simultaneously enters the women's quarters, and after her mother's womb a wom-

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[47] *Roman d'Énéas* 2054–5: "Il me furent commancemanz / De mort et de destrucïon."
[48] See chapter 3.

an knows nothing beyond these quarters. And so she is trained by her mother's hands in virginal conduct. She is shy and this extends even to her glance. She does not come within sight of males. To such a height of modesty do virgins come. She knows how to cling to maidenhood alone. She labors at spinning wool. She does the housekeeping in the women's quarters. She is reckoned as one of the maidservants. These are the deeds of the chaste woman, these the lessons learned by young girls.[49]

In Basilakes' refutation of Atalanta's plausibility, we read of how girls are fostered into womanhood from the moment that they are born. The myth of Atalanta's inherent femininity, as something that is living within her unconditionally, regardless of the world in which she has grown up, is refuted as implausible, since it does not factor in her life's material conditions. In this sense, we could perhaps say that Basilakes disenchants Atalanta from her ancient myth, humanizing her to become a girl like any other, who is affected by the world in which she lives, and acts accordingly.

Perhaps we should understand Dido in the Old French *Roman d'Énéas* as a character who, rather than primarily forming part of a mythological tradition of Trojan narratives, forms part of a medieval breaking with such a tradition. Perhaps this de-mythologization can be said to illuminate myth's risks of stagnating female characters in fixed roles; arguably the disenchantment liberates them from inherent limitations. Dido is not Penthesileia, she is not an Amazon, but rather, her characterization through mythological association is unwritten, more than myth she can be interpreted as representing an embodied subjectivity who orients in her (courtly) world.

The Amazonian character, and in the descriptions discussed from the *Roman de Troie* Penthesileia more specifically, can arguably be defined by her strength – equals of men, as it were. Women are blamed for being unreliable in the *Roman de Troie* and the *Roman d'Énéas* alike. In Benoît's romance, we

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[49] Basilakes, *Progymnasmata* 27, 48–56: Οὐκοῦν ἅμα τίκτεται βρέφος γυνή, καὶ προῆλθεν εἰς φῶς ἅμα καὶ θάλαμον καὶ μετὰ τὴν τεκοῦσαν νηδὺν οὐδὲν οἶδε πλέον θαλάμου. γυνὴ ἐπὶ τούτοις ὑπὸ ταῖς τῆς μητρὸς χερσὶν ἐκπαιδεύεται· τὰ παρθενικὰ αἰδεῖται μέχρι καὶ βλέμματος· εἰς ἀρρένων ὄψιν οὐκ ἔρχεται, ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον ἦλθεν αἰδοῦς τὸ τῶν παρθένων χρῆμα· μόνης οἶδε παρθενίας ἐξέχεσθαι· ὑπὸ τῇ ταλασίᾳ διαπονεῖται· περὶ τὴν γυναικωνῖτιν οἰκουρεῖ· ταῖς θεραπαινίσι συνεξετάζεται. ταῦτα γυναικὸς σωφρονούσης ἔργα, ταῦτα παρθένωνω παιδεύματα.

read that a strong woman, a virtuous woman, is a woman who separates herself from women in general, not merely on an abstract level in terms of characteristics, but in the case of the Amazons, in a highly literal sense. What is praised is the exception from the rule.

How did audiences consisting of women, in western and Byzantine courts alike, see themselves reflected in these Amazonian women, those exceptional women in literature who are defined through their contrasts to women in general? How did the literary tradition of these mythological warriors speak to women audiences? How did these women relate to the idea of their sex being condemnable, with the only alternative being to deny it by assimilating to masculine coded virtues? Is it in the choice to de-mythologize, in the removal of reception, so to speak, that we find testament of women-readers?

In another of his rhetorical exercises, namely a confirmation of Atalanta's plausibility (rather than a refutation of it), the narrator convinces the audience of her credibility by arguing that the strong women have indeed existed, which can be seen also among animals. As opposed to what the critic may say, which is that the rejection of a womanly upbringing is unnatural, the speaking voice thus argues for the contrary, namely that the construction of gender in culture is unnatural:

> But, the critic says, she was raised to be manly and, rejecting an upbringing at home, she boasted of what was unnatural behavior. And why is it an accusation against nature, if the pursuit of manliness was ever desirable for a woman too? For, first of all, one must not completely reject the idea of the female of the species being strong in those days. If you search even among wild animals, you will see that the female is also hard to fight, and it may be that you will be more courageous against the males. Second, if humans have been given the ability to fight wild animals, it would also be possible for the daughter of Oeneus, being human, to go hunting.[50]

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[50] Basilakes, *Progymnasmata* 28, 26–35: ἀλλὰ πρὸς ἀνδρίαν ἐτρέφετο καί, τὴν οἰκουρὸν ἀπολιποῦσα τροφήν, τὰ παρὰ φύσιν ἠλαζονεύετο. καὶ τί κατηγόρημα φύσεως, εἰ καὶ πρὸς γυναῖκά ποτε γέγονεν ἀνδρίας φιλότιμος; πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ οὐ πανταχῆ τὸ θῆλυ τοῦ γένους τότε εἰς ῥώμην ἧκον ἀποδοκιμαστέον. – κἂν εἰς τοὺς θῆρας ἐξιχνεύσῃς καὶ θήλειαν ὄψει δύσμαχον, καὶ μᾶλλον, εἰ τύχοι, θαρρήσεις τοῦ ἄρρενας. – ἔπειτα, εἰ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὁ πρὸς τὰ θηρία δέδοται πόλεμος, εἴη ἂν καὶ τὴν Οἰνέως οὖσαν ἄνθρωπον τὰ πρὸς θήραν ἀσκήσασθαι.

With Basilakes' *progymnasmata* as an example, we see how gender appears to have been a topic of interest during the twelfth century, and perhaps more specifically, ideas of what a woman is and can be. In the development of Old French romances, we can arguably see similar reasonings and ideas reflected in the narratives.

Further below in the confirmation, masculinity and femininity are defined not as essential to the male and female body respectively, but rather, that one needs to be able to acknowledge these qualities in both genders when they occur:

> If you exclude the female gender from manliness, make sure that you also call no man unwarlike. But if you ever faulted the male for his lack of manliness, make sure that you occasionally admire the female for her manliness as well. For if poetry turned all women into soldiers, it would be reasonable to mistrust this unreasonable depiction, but if the phenomenon is rare, the fact that this is surprising does not make it unbelievable. You also hear how the Amazon women, an entire nation, had war as their occupation and did not fear the Greeks even though they were men – the same Greeks whom the Trojans, who were also men, could not endure.[51]

With reference to the Amazons, womanhood can be opened up to mean something broader than what is usually thought of. By acknowledging the Amazons, women's potential reaches beyond the walls of the women's quarters. Atalanta should be acknowledged for her masculine coded virtues, the speaking voice states, just as much as men are acknowledged for their activity in hunting and the like. If women can under no circumstances be acknowledged for embodying masculine virtues, then men must unconditionally be recognized for embodying them, regardless of their individual actions. If a man is blamed for lacking manliness, then the woman

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[51] Basilakes, *Progymnasmata* 28, 35–45: εἰ δὲ τῆς ἀνδρείας τὸ γυναικεῖον φῦλον ἀπέκλεισας, ὅρα καὶ τῶν ἀνδρῶν μηδένα λέγειν ἀπόλεμον· εἰ δ' ἔστιν οὗ καὶ τὸ ἄρρεν εἰς ἀνδρίαν ἐμέμ-ψω, καὶ <τί> τὸ θῆλύ ποτε πρὸς ἀνδρίαν θαυμάσειν; εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἁπάσας γυναῖκας ἡ ποίη-σις ὥπλισεν, εἶχεν ἂν λόγον δυσπιστεῖν τὸ παράλογον, εἰ δὲ τὸ χρῆμα σπάνιον, οὐκ ἄπι-στα τὰ τοῦ θαύματος. Ἀκούεις δὲ καὶ τὰς Ἀμαζόνας γυναῖκας, ὅλον ἔθνος, ὅπως ἔργον εἶχον τὸν πόλεμον καί, ἄνδρας ὄντας, οὐκ ἐδεδίεσαν Ἕλληνας, οὓς οἱ περὶ Τροίαν, ἄν-δρες ὄντες, οὐκ ἔφερον.

who displays the same qualities ought to be praised. Accordingly, masculine and feminine characteristics, as it were, are not tied to one's body, but can be acknowledged in both sexes, and for which both sexes deserve recognition.

Atalanta's character can be contextualized to her upbringing far from the realms of gender norms in culture. Does this make her less of a woman? Not if we believe Basilakes' confirmation, as there is in reality nothing that should claim women to not be strong as they are, as seen above. Perhaps, thus, in this case of twelfth-century reception, we could interpret a discernible perspective on gender and womanhood, represented by Atalanta, as open for other definitions than the tradition would usually suggest. With Atalanta as an example, an idea of gender as not being an essence or inherently determined can be formulated.

By reading Dido in the *Roman d'Énéas* as compared with Atalanta in Basilakes' rhetorical exercises, perhaps we could reach something of an answer to the question as to why Penthesileia did not re-appear in the Old French version. Medieval Dido is transformed into a courtly woman with emotions, desires and thoughts, but who must hide these and who is punished for them within her social and material context. It is not an internal battle between her pursuit and her sex that causes Dido's demise, as one might say about the case of the *Aeneid*, but cultural factors. The choice of removal can thus arguably be interpreted as forming part of the poetic work. The absence also speaks. Maybe it tells us that there existed an audience of women who did not relate to the established view of women that condemned them as unreliable, if they did not distance themselves from their own sex in order to be deemed as strong, through contrast to other women. Beauvoir wrote about myth's part in the making of woman as the Other that:

> Any myth implies a Subject who projects its hopes and fears of a transcendent heaven. Not positing themselves as Subject, women have not created the virile myth that would reflect their projects; they have neither religion nor poetry that belongs to them alone. They still dream through men's dreams. They worship the gods made by males. And males have shaped the great virile figures for their own exaltation:

Hercules, Prometheus, Parsifal; in the destiny of these heroes, woman has merely a secondary role.[52]

Since her entrance into the world of text, the Amazon has functioned as a mirror for the (Greek) male subject. She is strong like him, a warrior just as he is, and thus, a threat to his supremacy. Her 'equality' is defined on the basis that she is more like man than other women. In the examples from Basilakes' rhetorical exercises, gender appears not to be an essence inherent in one's sex, and in the *Roman d'Énéas*, it appears as if Dido represents a similar idea of gender. Can she be strong and powerful, without it being explained by her association with the queen of the Amazons? Can she be strong and powerful, and a woman like any other?

The removal of Penthesileia from the *Roman d'Énéas* opens up the possibility to define woman as something beyond the given terms of androcentric mythology. Dido has become a courtly lady, a woman of flesh and blood, who feels desire and juggles her desire within a limited social setting. Medieval Dido is not a 'strong woman' in the sense that is found in the *Roman de Troie*. Neither is she necessarily condemnable. Rather, she can be interpreted as suffering from her culture's high demands on her being, demands that come into conflict with her subjectivity. In the *Roman d'Énéas*, the removal of Penthesileia is not necessarily replaced with another virtuous, strong woman figure. Dido is no longer myth, no longer legend. She is human, strong and weak at once, powerful yet filled with emotion. To me, this is what the removal of Penthesileia marks in this romance: the attempt to write forth a female subject through not only elaborations with, but also rejections of, Trojan myth.

Throughout this volume, Trojan receptions demonstrate their various ways to take form in medieval literature, as well as their potential to serve different purposes. Enchantment and disenchantment can have various functions. As Tine Scheijnen writes in this volume's introductory chapter, what binds the various cases of medieval Troy reception together, albeit across different languages, genres and contexts, is a joint need to adapt the Trojan tales to new socio-cultural systems and their sets of ideological val-

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[52] Beauvoir 1949, 166, from Borde and Malovany-Chevalier's (2011) translation.

ues.[53] As we have seen in the present volume, the creative diversity in how to have Trojan narratives serve different poets and scholars reveals the literary innovations embedded in medieval reception. The mythological heritage of ancient Troy tales can induce power in medieval female characters or it can doom them to a fate over which they possess no power. In this way, we see how receptions of Troy appear to be just as diverse as literary representations of gender. Additionally, we must consider the occasional aspect to courtly literature; how meaning is made in the occasion of reading as a collaboration between poet and audience. There is no one way to understand medieval reception of Troy, but as many as there are works in which we find it.

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[53] See chapter 1 "Facing the Other: Medieval Challenges in Retelling the Trojan Tale".

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